
GUINEA: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY

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GUINEA: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guinea has made good development progress in recent years but has a long way to go before graduating from the ranks of the world's poorest countries. This progress and Guinea's stability are, however, threatened by a number of potentially destabilizing factors. In the near term, these factors include multiparty elections, presidential succession struggles, and conflicts in neighboring countries that have made Guinea the host of the largest number of refugees in Africa. Over the long-term, continued high poverty and unemployment, coupled with negligible progress in job creation, may also conspire to trouble the peace in Guinea. Addressing these problems is made difficult by a fast growing and youthful population.

Another critical factor impacting Guinea's stability is the maintenance of peace within the military. The February 1996 mutiny within the army demonstrated how unanticipated violence can rise up suddenly to disturb the peace and reverse development progress. The Kapor-Rails riots following the government's razing of a neighborhood in the Ratoma commune of Conakry also showed how events can have unintended consequences and spin out of control. Fortunately for Guinea, neither of these events resulted in major setbacks for the country. Nonetheless, both of these events served as useful lessons about the potential for unrest in Guinea.

Low household incomes and a rising cost of living are inherently destabilizing. Any important rise in the cost of essential goods, especially rice, has the potential of sparking unrest. The continued freezing of salaries and lack of job creation could also lead to civil disturbances. The large accumulation of school graduates (primary, secondary and university) without jobs adds to social tensions.

Endemic corruption in Guinea and recent strong government efforts to combat it are producing additional tensions. The tendency for the concentration of growing wealth and power among elites within one ethnic group bears watching. The domination of key military and civilian government positions by members of one ethnic group is a concern. The division of major political parties along ethnic lines is an additional factor that makes ethnicity a growing factor in Guinea which, historically, has had a reputation for relative peace among its ethnic groups.

The peaceful and stable nature of Guinea is attributed to a number of factors. These include complex historical and cultural elements. Among these is the legacy of 26 (1958-1984) years of harsh dictatorial rule under Ahmed Sekou Touré. The positive role of Islam, the predominant religion in Guinea, is often cited as a stabilizing factor. There is some concern, however, that the younger generation of Guineans is less affected by social values, traditions and historical experiences which have helped maintain the peace in Guinea in the past.

An important concern for Guinea is the over-concentration of power in the presidency versus the weakness of other branches of government. The lack of power and autonomy of Guinea's young, three-year old National Assembly contributes greatly to this governmental power imbalance. An ill-equipped and less than independent judiciary makes it a weak branch of government. Furthermore, the government's delay in holding elections for grassroots institutions calls into question its commitment to democratic principles.

The generally low health level of the Guinean people is important among the factors which contribute to Guinea's status as one of the world's poorest countries. The high fertility rate among Guinean women is potentially destabilizing, as population growth outstrips resources available for development. Also, the consequences of a population structure where nearly 50 percent of the people are under the age of 15 weighs heavily on Guinea's development prospects and ability to remain peaceful. Environmental problems and Guinea's high dependence on rice imports make it harder to sustain developmental progress.

Guinea is recognized as a good structural adjustment performer, yet this good performance has not resulted in any significant reduction in the extreme poverty that prevails in Guinea, particularly in its rural areas where the vast majority of its population resides. The unequal distribution of wealth among the population also is causing some discontent. Moreover, the transition to liberalized economic and political systems is causing additional strains among some segments of the population.

There is some question of how much longer the population can patiently wait for the benefits of economic reforms. Fulfilling the promise of economic reforms will require a much higher level of private investment, particularly in the non-mining sector. Without substantial and constant increases in private investment, the number of jobs needed to absorb a large mass of the jobless will never be created. Increasing jobs, salaries and the purchasing power at the average household level are important to avoiding civil unrest.

Guinea's human rights record remains poor and, as such, damages its image as an emerging democracy.

The number of arbitrary arrests and deaths in prison due to unhealthy conditions contributes heavily to this poor record. The absence of private radio and television stations is also of particular note. A growing crime rate and reports of limited use of Conakry as a transit point by international drug dealers are added worries. Law enforcement personnel are under-equipped and unprepared to deal with these growing problems.

With adequate means and good leadership and governance, Guinea has the potential to avoid major conflict and achieve an acceptable development growth rate. Bringing to an end the conflict in Sierra Leone and repatriating or resettling the large number of refugees currently in Guinea is vital to Guinea's stability and development. Making the arrangements, including civilian oversight of the military, required to assure a peaceful succession to President Conte in 2003 will be crucial to maintaining stability in Guinea.

The holding of fair and honest presidential elections this December and in 2003 will represent major tests of the current government's commitment to democracy. The National Assembly elections in the

year 2000 will also be of high importance. The peaceful transfer of power to a new president through legitimate multiparty elections in 2003 would distinguish Guinea as one of the more advanced democracies on the African continent.

Other factors that are currently of less importance but could disturb the peace in Guinea include the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and undesirable foreign interests. Fortunately, drought, the famine occasioned by it, and other natural disasters are infrequent and not severe. Guinea's favorable agricultural base and climate also lessen the stress caused by poverty.

Possible crisis scenarios include the mismanagement of the upcoming presidential elections in December and an increased level of violence in Sierra Leone, which would result in more refugees, and a higher level of armed conflict inside Guinea. Another scenario presented is a revolt within the military similar to the one in February 1996, but resulting this time in the toppling of the government. A sudden, big hike in rice prices and the cost of living are also elements that figure strongly in a destabilizing scenario. The chaos that might ensue from the untimely demise of the president is another possible crisis scenario. Indicators to anticipate such scenarios and track elements that could work to create conflict or instability are suggested.

Safeguarding Guinea's high natural development potential and keeping Guinea on its promising long-term development track requires treating Guinea as a special development case. This is particularly the case in light of violent conflicts in neighboring countries and the large refugee presence, both of which make huge parts of Guinea unstable. An exceptional, well-coordinated and well-supported integrated program of development, humanitarian and military assistance will be required to maintain securely Guinea's position as an island of stability in the sub-region. Such a program would require a much greater flow of resources from donor countries than is currently the case.

The quality of governance and national leadership provided will be decisive in Guinea's case. Competent and inspiring leadership will be essential to guide Guinea safely and soundly through this difficult transition period. Such leadership can help quell the growth of despair and loss of hope which often fuel the tensions underpinning a rise in instability. In Guinea's case, this means that much depends on the abilities and wisdom of the president and his close associates.

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METHODOLOGY

Discussions with a wide variety of informants were the main source for many of the views presented in this assessment. The methodological approach used, "Crisis Prevention, Mitigation, and Response System," was developed by HumaniTech Inc. of Annandale, VA, USA. Additional information and insights were culled from secondary sources. The author's previous experience as USAID Representative to Guinea, 1983 to 1987, and his development and humanitarian assistance experience in Africa since 1970 contributed heavily to the content of this assessment. Personal knowledge and direct observation during the October 12 to November 14 1998 period this assessment was composed were critical to its completion.

GUINEA: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Guinea is more fortunate than most African countries. In spite of violent conflict in neighboring countries, Guinea has remained peaceful. Guinea also distinguishes itself by favorable economic and social progress indicators. The efforts of the Government of Guinea to liberalize its economy while undergoing a democratic transition also make Guinea stand out when compared with many other African countries. With the continued maintenance of a peaceful, stable and predictable environment, and improvements in governance, the long-term prospects are good for Guinea to graduate from its status as one of the world's poorest countries.

It is remarkable that Guinea has been able to avoid any major crisis while it continues to struggle to recover from the economic and social ruin brought about by 26 years (1958 to 1984) of dictatorial rule under its first President, Ahmed Sekou Touré. The profound human suffering and the destruction of one of West Africa's richest economies that occurred during this period offer sobering lessons. This harsh experience and the violent conflicts that have wracked neighboring countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau) in recent years contribute to the Guinean people's desire to maintain the peaceful and stable environment needed to pursue development objectives at an acceptable pace.

There is, however, no guarantee that this long period of relative peace will endure. Events like the violent military mutiny of February 1996 serve as a rude reminder that Guinea, like most countries in Africa, is not immune from the kind of destructive crises which can reverse socio-economic development and exact a heavy toll in human lives. Being aware of, and staying prepared for, such threats to the welfare of Guinea and its people is an important part of development administration.

Although the events of February 1996 did not result in the toppling of the government, it is easy to imagine the unsettling effects on Guinea's development if this violent event had resulted in a change of government. The subsequent civil unrest and destabilizing outcomes of such a reversal would have resulted in a major setback to Guinea's developmental progress. Many donors would have been obliged to suspend their assistance. In particular, USAID/Guinea would have been subjected to section 508 of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, which requires a suspension of aid when a duly elected government is overthrown by the military.

Every USAID Mission in Africa should have at least a nominal contingency plan to guide its actions in the event section 508 comes into play. This contingency plan should be reflected in ongoing updates of the U.S. Mission's emergency evacuation plan. While little preparation is possible with regard to the quick onset of unanticipated emergencies, the shifting of U.S. Mission resources and talents over time to help mitigate the development of potential "slow burn" crises should be possible.

While no major crisis is currently anticipated for Guinea, development administrators must keep in

mind the consequences of possible "wild card" events and be prepared to deal with them. An ounce of disaster prevention and preparedness is worth more than a pound of emergency relief assistance. The value of preventing and mitigating disasters that exact a high toll in terms of human suffering and set back development progress is all too obvious.

GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE KEY TO AVOIDING CONFLICT

A major challenge facing the Government of Guinea is to continue to deal fairly, in a transparent and accountable manner, with the grievances brought forth by segments of society. Meeting this challenge will require, *inter alia*, full respect of fundamental civil liberties and human rights. It will also require maintaining a sincere pursuit of a true economic and political restructuring that benefits all Guineans. Combating corruption at all levels, discouraging ethnic favoritism and assuring that the "rule of law" prevails all must be important aspects of this pursuit.

Improvement in good governance should result in the end of legal impunity for any individual and make more difficult the creation of an elitist, privileged class. It should also mean that the government intervenes in a manner that defuses crises instead of protracting them. Encouraging the government to act in this manner should be a high priority for donor countries. Ideally, this kind of good governance means maintaining a low corruption level among government officials, who are fully and competently engaged in alleviating poverty and pursuing Guinea's development goals.

Making average Guineans less poor and vulnerable to crisis should be a main focus of the government. Alleviating poverty and creating jobs at a quickened pace are among the best approaches to preventing civil unrest. Democracy is quite effective in the African context to the extent that it improves individuals' well being. Restoring fully the hopes of long-suffering people for a better future and creating the conditions which motivate them to take control of their destiny should be important results of the ongoing democratic transition. Effective politics are needed for Guinea to avoid significant crises and for its economic development plans to succeed.

BACKGROUND: POSSIBLE SOURCES OF CONFLICT AND INSTABILITY

The following section outlines various potential sources of conflict and instability which could, either in the short- or long-term, create circumstances that could spoil the peace in Guinea and set back developmental progress. This background is intended to both inform the reader and stimulate further thinking and discussion. It must be noted that a deficient information base in Guinea made obtaining precise data very difficult.

TRADITIONAL THREATS TO STABILITY: ETHNICITY AND CORRUPTION

Ethnic Tensions

Following the 1984 death of Guinea's founding president, Ahmed Sekou Touré, numerous dire predictions were made about the maintenance of stability in Guinea. There were well-founded

predictions about a rise in ethnic violence among the three major ethnic groups (Peulh, 35-40 percent, Malinke, 30-35 percent and Soussou, about 20 percent). In particular, it was thought that Touré's Malinke group, which dominated power under the First Republic (1958-1984), would attempt to regain control. The "Diarra Coup" attempt of July 4, 1985, gave credence to this view, but the popular manner through which it was put down not only physically eliminated many of Touré's remaining associates, but further alienated most of the population from repeated subjection to a Malinke-dominated government.

To a certain extent, this animosity by other ethnic groups against Malinkes for the suffering their kinfolk caused under the harsh Touré regime persists today. Although all ethnic groups suffered under Touré's brutal regime, and there is probably not a single family in Guinea that did not lose a member during this sad period, this perception still makes it very hard for Malinkes to be elected to posts of national leadership. It is interesting, however, to note a number of Malinkes who served prominently under Sekou Touré are working for the current government.

Numerically the largest ethnic group, many among the Peulh thought one of their own should replace Sekou Touré. Initially, the idea of a Soussou being president was hard to accept by many; the traditional perception was that the Soussou would be disinclined to accept leadership of the nation. The fact that the current President, General Lansana Conte, a Soussou, has remained in power over 14 years has eroded this stereotype and perhaps helped keep the peace in Guinea.

At the same time, one man at the helm of a nation for such a long period raises fundamental questions about the nature of Guinean politics and culture that should not be overlooked. Throughout Africa, presidential longevity has led to cronyism, nepotism and ethnic partisanship. Guinea is no exception to this general rule and, accordingly, indications of consolidation of power around members of the same ethnic group should be watched closely. Such monitoring will especially be important in the period preceding the presidential elections in 2003, when the current president is prohibited by the constitution (*Loi Fondamentale*) from running for a third five-year term.

It is remarkable, however, that traditional ethnic tensions have not contributed more to conflict or instability in Guinea. This does not mean that violence cannot breakout along ethnic lines when sparked by external factors. For example, the "Ratoma Riots" of February and March 1998 in Conakry demonstrated how civil strife can quickly take on an ethnic coloration.

The Ratoma Riots involved the government razing of up to 10,000 houses and shops in the Kaporó Rails area of Conakry, displacing over 120,000 people. It was perhaps correctly claimed that all these buildings had been illegally built for years on property belonging to the government. The population mostly effected by this act were ethnic Peulhs, who are for the most part strong supporters of one of the two main opposition parties. The violent protest that ensued resulted in the deaths of eight civilians and one gendarme, and the arrest of 59 people, including two religious leaders and three opposition members of the National Assembly. One of these individuals was the head of the largest opposition party, who was subsequently held in prison for almost three months.

Given the scope of destruction and suffering caused by the government, it is surprising that the public reaction was not more violent and lengthy. In some ways this was a real test for the political opposition and the government. The fact that the government was able to act in this manner without a major and prolonged protest on the part of opposition supporters is remarkable. This action is even more remarkable given that members of the National Assembly are supposed to have immunity from arrest. The Ratoma Riots demonstrated the weakness of the opposition and the general reticence on the part of the Guinean people in regard to political involvement and risk taking.

While some of those arrested complained of neglect and torture during their several months of detention, it is to the government's credit that most cases were tried in a fair and transparent manner by an ordinary tribunal in Conakry. Relatively light sentences were handed out and it is not believed any of those arrested are still being detained.

The lessons learned by the government from this incident should be of some help if and when any similar incidents occur. In any event, the possibility of "latent" ethnicity raising its ugly head during times of trouble should not be overlooked. Difficulties could occur during the upcoming presidential elections in December, especially if the government tampers with election results.

Corruption and Greed

Throughout history, corruption and greed at all levels of government have perverted Guinea's administrative management and stymied developmental progress. While anecdotal evidence suggests that petty corruption (mostly small bribes) continues to thrive at all levels, most long-time observers of Guinea agree that big acts of corruption occur less frequently. This corruption pattern may be partly due to strong action by the government, especially the financial reforms being conducted by the Ministry of Finance. In any event, obtaining precise information on corruption in Guinea is very difficult.

Combating corruption at every level is a necessary, but daunting, task. Donors may wish to consider assisting the government with the establishment of an honest and effective independent Anti-Corruption Commission. To the extent that the Constitution allows, the strengthening of the competency and capacity of an independent judiciary would also be helpful in this regard. Ways to increase the circulation level and investigative reporting capacity of the independent press should also be considered.

The general weakness of the local independent press and the absence of private radio and television stations is lamentable and needs to be examined more deeply. Several applications for the establishment of private radio stations have been submitted but the government continues to refuse their approval. There is also one application for the establishment of a private television station from a Libyan source that is pending approval. The opening of a private radio station over the next year will be an important indicator of the government's sincerity with regard to the freedom of expression. Certainly, any attempts by the government to intimidate the private media should be condemned by donors.

As reported in the United Nations' Development Program Human Development Report for 1997, corruption increases poverty because it diverts resources away from the poor to the rich. For example, the rich can afford the bribes required to obtain goods and services they desire while the poor cannot. The rich and well-connected are also capable of outright theft of government assets for their own personal use.

Government downsizing and increased privatization has helped to reduce this problem, but the distribution of wealth remains greatly skewed in Guinea. Some suggest that 80 percent of commercial activity in Guinea is controlled by 20 percent of the population. This 20 percent of the population includes 20 to 30 very wealthy indigenous Guinean and Lebanese families, the latter resident in Guinea for a generation or more. If possible, improvements in more equitable distribution of this wealth should be monitored.

Every effort should be made to fight the development of a culture of impunity where the wealthy and well connected remain above the reach of the law. Prosecuting and sentencing important personalities involved in corrupt and illicit activities can often be an important benchmark for measuring the seriousness of a government's commitment to combating corruption. As such cases may arise, donors should insist on the serious judicial pursuit of any such culprits, regardless of their political or social status.

Guinea's efforts to establish independent auditing and inspection units should be supported. However, these units will have difficulty performing correctly if their agents are not paid well. The same applies to other government agents working in such key, sensitive areas as the administration of justice, tax collection and police/security work. The government may want to consider granting certain jobs special status with salaries at a schedule higher than the regular civil service. Higher salaries and an "incentive-bonus" system, coupled with rigorous supervision and performance evaluations, will help employees resist the temptations of corruption.

In this regard, the government's decision to turn over customs collection responsibilities to a private international firm is laudable. Government action to clamp down on corrupt activities is, however, introducing a new element of potential conflict. Since many government agents have depended for years on bribes and other corrupt practices to live at the standard they desired, turning off "corruption spigots" is having a profound effect on many families. These families are not happy with their "unlivable wages" and may look for other illicit ways to maintain their standard of living.

While there are measures that can help reduce corruption, conditions will favor corruption as long as the vast majority of Guineans remain mired in poverty. As long as Guineans cannot earn enough to satisfy their essential needs and have no reliable system to provide them with adequate benefits in times of ill-health or old age, it will be extremely difficult to do much about the ingrained corruption which has prevailed in Guinea for so long.

CIVIL-MILITARY AND INTRA-MILITARY RELATIONS

The army mutiny of February 2-3, 1996, served as a wake-up call for the government and the population. Angry soldiers demanding higher pay and better working conditions rampaged through Conakry's streets. The ensuing battle between rebel and loyal soldiers left between 30 and 50 people dead, mostly civilians killed by stray bullets. The violence was quelled by President Conte's promise to establish a multi-party committee to look into the rebels' grievances. Oddly, the President disbanded this committee before it could issue its final report.

The judicial processing of accused mutineers did not begin until March 1998 and lasted through August 1998; sentences were pronounced on September 24-25, 1998. Since the special court established for the trial of the mutineers, *Cour de Surete*, is not recognized under the new Constitution, some jurists debated its legality. The Supreme Court, however, expressed the view that this special court is valid as its existence pre-dated the Constitution. The governing rule is that the Constitution would not supersede pre-existing governmental institutions unless specifically stated in the Constitution or subsequent government decrees.

In any event, it is to the government's credit that the trial proceedings were held in a fair and open manner, with no one receiving a death sentence. The popular protest against this mutiny and the exemplary manner in which the government ultimately processed those involved through its specially established court will contribute to preventing a repeat of similar incidents. However, as past experience has demonstrated throughout Africa, monitoring closely morale and tensions within the military ranks will always be important. Related to this was the failure to capture one of the more important mutineers before they fled to neighboring countries.

It is instructive to review the composition of the 38 soldiers who received sentences varying from seven months of imprisonment to 20 years of hard labor. Of these 38 soldiers, 34 are officers, including four colonels, seven majors, nine captains, 11 lieutenants and three second lieutenants. Among these 34 officers, only five or six are ethnic Soussous, including two of the four colonels. The latter four received the lightest sentences of seven months of imprisonment each (as they had already been in prison well over two years they were immediately released). The highest sentence received by any ethnic Soussou was 27 months. Perhaps it is also worth noting that the judge appointed by the President to preside over these proceedings was a prominent Soussou.

The above cursory analysis of the composition of the "mutineers" can lead one to believe this was mainly a "non-Soussou" revolt. Given that the President and many of the most powerful members of the military cabinet are Soussou, this could have grave implications for future command and discipline within the military. Already, the army is facing the problem of restructuring itself to accommodate the loss of so many officers and the recuperation of soldiers who participated in the mutiny. Added to this challenge is the discontent within the joint chiefs of staff concerning insufficient consultation by the President. The military promotion lists, announced on November 1, 1998, the annual army anniversary day, may provide some clues of how military leaders are struggling to manage these problems.

Maintaining peace in Guinea requires, therefore, ensuring peace is maintained within the military. This is done best by assuring that military personnel are led fairly and competently, adequately trained and

paid well in a timely manner. Resource-poor armies with ill-defined roles and weak leadership represent one of the greatest dangers to peace and development in Africa. In Guinea's case, it appears that the role of the military and the manner in which it is managed has changed little since the pre-democratic transition era. This failure to adapt military control and administration to reflect the transition to a democratic society could represent one of the biggest threats to long-term peace in Guinea.

One of the most difficult challenges facing Guinea's democratic transition is establishing civilian oversight of its military forces. President Conte made an important gesture in this direction by appointing late last year a civilian Minister of Defense, the first time in Guinea's history. In reality, however, President Conte remains the country's only active general and all military policy is determined exclusively at the presidential level. Nothing concerning the military, its operations or its budget, ever comes before the National Assembly, which should have some involvement with such matters.

Ethnicity and Lack of Civilian Oversight Troublesome

It is troublesome that Guinea continues to lag behind other African countries in adapting the role of the military to new democratic realities while it makes good progress in economic and social areas. Resolving this incongruity should be an important development objective. Also troublesome, as already mentioned, is that most of the Ministry of Defense Cabinet are members of the President's own ethnic group (Soussou), and many of these and non-Soussou officers have been close associates of the President for many years.

Of the 36 top military positions in Guinea, Soussou occupy 15, Peulh 11, Malinke six and one of the Forest Region ethnic groups four. It is also important to note that the elite presidential guard is led by, and predominantly composed of, members of Conte's ethnic group. A similar ethnic mix prevails in the top echelons of the civilian government.

Certainly security concerns that revolve around trust and reliability come into play here, but these kind of ethnic affinity and friendship arrangements at the presidential level are bound to cause problems for any democratic transition, particularly if elections result in a change of leadership. It is, therefore, of great importance that steps be taken during President Conte's last term, 1999-2003, to remedy some of these problems. Knowing the professional and personal ambitions of key military personnel, and conflicts that their individual ambitions might inspire, would be helpful in this regard. This knowledge would also be important in the event of President Conte's untimely death. Examining possible scenarios in a post-Conte era would be instructive.

One factor that continues to prevail in Guinea is the public's distrust and fear of the security forces. Some of this is engendered by the harsh manner in which civilians are regularly treated by the security forces (police, gendarmes, army) and the frequent insistence for bribes that occurs at the road blocks often set up throughout the country. Reports of alleged collaboration between security personnel and bandits further undermine public confidence. In particular, complaints are heard in Conakry where military roadblocks go up every midnight at numerous locations.

While the government maintains that the roadblocks are necessary to reduce crime and prevent incursions from neighboring warring countries, the harassment that average citizens often endure at these roadblocks is greatly resented. The 24-hour military roadblock at "kilometer 36," which controls traffic in and out of Conakry, and has existed since the Touré regime, is especially resented. This heavy military presence and the continued abusive behavior of many of its personnel make it hard to distinguish today's Guinea from the Guinea of 15 years ago. The powerful and fearful role still played by the military in Guinean affairs is disturbing and its continuance will prevent Guinea from becoming a truly democratic country.

The government may want to study examples of how other African countries have worked to improve relations between the public and the military. These examples include involving the military in development activities, open forums between civilian and military leaders, open houses at military bases, etc. Again, involving elected civilian leadership in the oversight of the armed forces also would be instrumental in improving relations. This would require more transparency in exposing the military's budget and expenditures.

One other military matter that is worth considering is the impact of violent conflict in neighboring countries on Guinea and its troops. Guinea has provided a substantial number of troops to assist in quelling violence in Liberia, Sierra Leone and, more recently, Guinea-Bissau. In fact, an estimated 50 percent of Guinea's 8,000-strong army is occupied with maintaining security along the borders with these three countries or assigned to ECOMOG in Sierra Leone. Information on the cost of this protracted mobilization to the Guinean treasury would be of interest; unfortunately, no details on this are available.

It is also difficult to ascertain how many Guinean soldiers have lost their lives in these conflicts. The 146 posthumous decorations announced on November 1, 1998, "Army Anniversary Day," give some idea of the number of military personnel who lost their lives in Liberia, Sierra Leone or Guinea-Bissau. However, the real number is thought to be much larger than this. Some Guineans are beginning to ask why so many soldiers were lost in these conflicts and how decisions are made about selecting the soldiers who are ordered into battle.

Families who have lost members are complaining that they are not properly informed of their losses, the bodies of their beloved ones are not yet returned and they have not received any compensation for their losses. The continued relative high loss of Guinean soldiers in battle is bound to have negative consequences within the army and in the civilian sub-population who are losing their breadwinners. The high number of officers lost in these conflicts and to the army mutiny of February 1996 has important human resource and management consequences for the Guinean military.

Although unlikely, one should not rule out the possibility that over time informal, mutually beneficial alliances could develop between Guinean soldiers and rebel groups. Also possible is the recruitment by rebels of young Guinean men from the large mass of unemployed youth in Guinea. Another concern is the joining of escaped or released Guinea army mutineers with rebel groups in neighboring countries. A good operational practice would be frequent rotations of troops in and out of these border regions.

In this regard, monitoring arm flows into and from conflict areas could become important, as would be determining the source of financing for these arms. There is some anecdotal evidence that these border conflicts are making it easier to acquire arms in Guinea.

The impact of this experience with violence in neighboring countries on morale and attitude within the military should be examined, as should the drain on Guinea's finances. (The exact percentage of the national budget which is consumed by security force expenditures probably is not obtainable, as it appears that military spending is kept intentionally obscure; it is estimated at 20 to 25 percent). The prospect that border engagements of the Guinean military will be long term in nature has important implications for development planning, since reducing the percentage of the national budget devoted to security purposes should be an important objective.

UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

The uneven distribution of key civilian posts within the government is also worrisome. An analysis of the top posts in 26 ministries and 16 government parastatals or mixed enterprises indicates heavy favoritism toward the Soussou ethnic group, the Maritime Region and friends and supporters of President Conte. Ten of the 26 ministers and 13 directors of the 16 government enterprises are Soussou. As the latter enterprises are very important from a financial point of view, their control is of high significance.

Five ministers are Peulh and six are Malinke. The remaining two ministers are from the Forest Region. Eight secretary generals and nine *chefs de cabinet* within these 26 Ministries are Soussou. Three secretary generals and four *chefs de cabinets* are Peulh, while Malinkes hold altogether five of these positions. There are no secretary generals from the Forest Region, but two members from ethnic groups in this region hold *chef de cabinet* positions.

Of the five Peulh ministers, two owe their nomination to their noble or marabout family linkages in the Fouta Djallon. Another Peulh is from Boke in the Maritime Region (Basse Guinee), a stronghold of President Conte and the ruling PUP party. Boke is also the hometown of the President's first wife. Four other ministers come from this area in the home region of the President. One Peulh minister is the half-brother of a former minister who was obliged to leave office in disgrace. Five or six of the Soussou ministers appear to owe their positions partially to the influence exercised by one of the two first ladies.

Soussous hold the important Ministerial portfolios of Finance, Interior and Decentralization, and Natural Resources, Energy and Environment. The Prime Minister is of mixed ethnic background but he is also from Boke. The Secretary General of the National Islamic League, a post with ministerial rank, is a Soussou. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is a Malinke but, as a former member of the military government that followed the Touré regime, he is very close to the President. The civilian Minister of Defense is from a minority ethnic group, Koniagui, from the Forest Region.

Although the above analysis could benefit from more information, it is sufficient to show the

significance of ethnic and regional origin in determining the distribution of important government jobs. It also demonstrates the special role family ties and personal relations with the presidential family can play. Personal loyalty to the president and political advantage in some cases can be more important than ethnic affinity. Maintaining the backing of wealthy commercial interests and the military are also important factors in determining presidential nominations.

In any event, a review of these 67 important posts (ministers, secretary generals, *chefs de cabinet* and state enterprise directors) revealed that 40 of these positions, or 60 percent, are held by Soussou, an ethnic group which represents approximately 20 percent of the population. This situation illustrates that the Peulh and Malinke are proportionally under-represented in this government, holding 18 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of the aforementioned positions. On a regional basis, the area the most under represented is the Haute Guinee, home area of most Malinkes. One important indicator of change will be how this ministerial line-up is modified following announcement of the December 14 election results.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

The development of strong independent civic organizations in Guinea is in an embryonic stage. Outside of the Guinean Organization for Human Rights (OGDH) and worker unions such as the teachers union (SLECG), there are virtually no independent organizations in Guinea which can exercise much pressure on the government. It is difficult to qualify even the aforementioned organizations as influential. Since the demise of the Touré regime in 1984 and the completion of the 1991 Constitution, a good number of Guinean non-governmental organizations have been established. However, it will take many more years and much investment before any of these organizations are strong enough to represent a force in Guinean society.

There are religious organizations that at times have some influence. These include most importantly the National Islamic League, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. There are also social-professional groups of traders, women's interests (e.g., the association of women market vendors), former ambassadors, legal attorneys, etc. In Conakry, "ressortissant" associations based on hometown or regional origins are quite active. Social, economic and political actions taken by these groups can be characterized generally as spontaneous in reaction to special circumstances and lasting for only a brief period. In other words, these groups usually intervene only for specific problems as they arise.

The National Islamic League is viewed by many as a strong ally of government leadership. Its Secretary General is named by the President and the League has ministerial status. The League plays an important conciliatory role among the population. It encourages the resolution of conflict among individuals by leaders of Guinea's many mosques and promotes solidarity among Guineans. It is supportive of the Guinean tendency to resolve grievances at the community or family level. Having the League's backing would be an extremely important factor for any political candidate.

This Islamic structure often works closely with traditional approaches to arbitrating local disputes. Important in this regard is the role of marabouts. The influence of marabouts in the daily lives of

Guineans is a major facet of Guinea's socio-cultural fabric. The most famous of the marabout families have great social and political influence. Political leaders like to cater to these families in order to ensure their prayers and support will be easily forthcoming when needed. It is thought that at least two ministers owe their nominations to their links with these families.

The Archbishop of Conakry has been known to use his position to condemn the acts of government officials, politicians or business people which he deems as being wrong. He has also spoken out against growing criminality and juvenile delinquency. There are also instances where he has lent his support to the nomination of certain individuals to top government posts. At all levels, respected elders and religious leaders play a paramount role in mediating disputes. This role is helpful in keeping many litigious cases out of the formal court system.

POLITICS AND UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Most observers believe Guinea's second multi-party presidential elections on December 14, 1998 will be peaceful, managed in an honest manner, and that President Lansana Conte will be easily re-elected in the first round of voting with a solid majority. Many believe that President Conte is more popular than ever and that the opposition is correspondingly less popular. Accordingly, the ruling party (PUP - *Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès*) will have little reason to tamper with election results, as was alleged the case in Guinea's first experience with multiparty elections in December 1993.

Some observers categorized these first presidential elections as controversial. It was believed the first round of voting gave President Conte less than the 50 percent of the total vote needed to avoid a runoff election. Such a runoff was avoided when the government annulled the ballots (approximately 100,000 votes) in the two prefectures of Kankan and Siguiri because of alleged voting fraud. Since these two prefectures are Malinke strong-holds of a main opposition party (RPG - *Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée*), the perception was that the government took this action to avoid a runoff. This gave President Conte about 51.5 percent of the vote, instead of an estimated 48 percent. Overall, President Conte was elected by 32 percent of the registered voters. This percentage would be much less if all eligible voters, registered and unregistered, were taken into account. Nearly 62 percent of registered voters cast their vote.

The government annulment of ballots in these two prefectures in 1993 remains a sensitive issue for the opposition and, therefore, it is hoped the government will not risk trouble again by taking questionable steps to assure the victory of its president. This is particularly true as it appears that such steps are not needed to assure the reelection of President Conte, even if the opposition is able to unite around a single candidate. To avoid problems, the government should be working more to satisfy opposition grievances and to make the "playing field" more level for the upcoming presidential elections. As it stands now, the election "playing field" appears tilted in favor of the ruling party, since it controls the government and thus has a much larger resource base to draw upon.

Opposition Leaders Voice Concerns

While peaceful and generally fair elections are expected in December, there is no guarantee there will not be unrest. Some members of the opposition are not happy. One area of contention is that the 10 demands (reduced from 30) of the opposition coordination body (CODEM) have not been satisfied by the government. Among these mostly reasonable requests is the establishment of an independent electoral commission.

While the opposition appears to be satisfied with the government decree of October 15, 1998, establishing a 68-member High Council for Electoral Affairs (*Haut Conseil aux Affaires Electorales*), it is puzzling why the government has resisted the establishment of an independent electoral commission, as most other African countries have done. The establishment of an independent electoral commission may not be necessary in the Guinean context, as it is not the only condition required to guarantee free and fair elections. However, this resistance undermines confidence in the sincerity of the government's commitment to free, fair and transparent elections. This resistance could result in tarnishing Guinea's external image as an emerging democracy.

Another concern of the opposition is equal access to the media. In this regard, it is important to note that the government controls TV stations, radio stations and a major newspaper and that the circulation of the fledgling private press remains low and subject to frequent government intimidation. As noted previously, it is remarkable that there are not yet any private radio or TV stations operating in Guinea. The recent government announcement that it will provide opposition party leaders with equitable airtime should help avoid unrest and cries of unfairness on the part of the opposition. The overt use of government resources for ruling party business could, however, cause unrest.

These conciliatory gestures on the part of the government toward opposition parties and their leaders help reduce the hardening of attitudes of some opposition leaders toward the government and the ruling party. One main opposition leader is already warning that his party and its supporters will not accept peacefully, as they did in 1993, any act on the part of the government that manipulates the results of the election. While these warnings on the part of the opposition are perhaps exaggerated, some seriousness should be attached to them. The government's recent decision to provide one billion Guinean Francs (about \$800,000) for opposition party election campaigning is also helpful in reducing these tensions.

It is wise to question how the upcoming elections will be different from those held in 1993. It does appear that this time around the government has profited from its past electoral experiences and is better prepared to organize and manage these elections. Nonetheless, the opposition expects to win the vast majority of the vote in their Peulh and Malinke strongholds in the Moyenne and Haute Guinee Regions, respectively. If this is true, it again will be very difficult for President Conte to obtain the 50 percent or more of the votes he needs to avoid a successive runoff election. It is to be noted that international observers will take a more careful look this time at the validity of annulling votes. Unfortunately, it does not appear the number of observers will be adequate to cover all the regions of Guinea.

Some observers say President Conte will receive more votes in other tribal regions this time because

opposition leaders are said to be less popular and the President has done a good job of courting the vote in these regions. President Conte's frequent visits to these regions and the government funding of projects that have benefited the people in these regions are said to have raised the President's popularity in the opposition areas. In spite of this view, the possibility of some violence occurring during and following the December 14 elections should not be ruled out. In particular, special attention should be given to urban areas in Haute Guinee which have a history of civil unrest.

Political Parties Divided Along Ethnic Lines

Ethnic groups in Guinea historically have lived together in peace. However, there are some concerns that multiparty democracy could alter this situation since most supporters of the major opposition parties are from the same ethnic group and region as the leaders of these parties. For example, the Peulh, who predominate in the Moyenne Guinee Region, generally lend their support to the UNR (*Union pour la Nouvelle Republique*) presidential candidate, Ba Mamadou. In a like manner, the Malinke-dominated region, the Haute Guinee, supports the RPG party head, Alpha Conde.

In this way, these two major opposition parties are considered the Peulh (UNR) and Malinke (RPG) parties, respectively. The current union of the smaller PRP party (*Parti du Renouveau et du Progres*) with the UNR party will further consolidate the Peulh power base. In the unlikely event that Peulhs and Malinkes join together behind one candidate, any candidate from the Maritime Region could never be elected. As it appears that the Peulh leadership would much rather work with Soussous than with Malinkes, this will probably never happen. Certainly, Soussou leaders will continue to cultivate alliances with important Peulh families in order to prevent the formation of alliances between the Peulh and Malinke.

This is complicated by history. For instance, there are frustrations among the Malinkes about their political aspirations being constrained by the general impression they had their turn with the 26 years of disastrous rule under the Malinke Sekou Touré. The Peulh, the largest ethnic group — but only slightly more than the Malinke — also are frustrated. The Peulh feel they were the ones who suffered the most under Touré and, therefore, deserve a turn at running the country. While one should not read too much into such generalizations, noting the perceptions that prevail in the minds of many Guineans is important as these perceptions can be more important than reality.

Free and fair elections are the best remedy for relieving frustrations and diffusing pent-up ethnic tensions. In this vein, it is important that the government not discourage voter turnout and the opposition to such an extent that the upcoming elections are boycotted. A boycott would be one of the worst possible outcomes of current preparation for the election campaign period beginning 30 days prior the December 14 election date. Meeting more of CODEM's demands will help avoid the possibility of a boycott.

Increased National Assembly Autonomy and Elections Important

The National Assembly elections in the year 2000 will be important in terms of maintaining peace and

stability in Guinea. These elections could result in a very different result than the one in 1995, where the ruling party garnered 76 of 114 seats. Those elected in this year will know that they will serve beyond President Conte, whose constitutionally mandated last term expires in 2003.

It should be noted that only 38 of the 114 National Assembly representatives are elected by direct voting suffrage. The remainder is appointed on a proportional basis by party leadership. This means, for example, that 46 of the PUP ruling party's 76 National Assembly representatives were selected by the party's executive committee and approved by President Conte. The PUP won 30 of the 38 elected seats in National Assembly.

The RPG was able to appoint 15 representatives since it won four elected seats. The UNR and PRP each won two elected seats and were each allowed to name seven representatives. Five other smaller parties gained enough votes to appoint collectively six representatives. There are seven women representatives, all appointed by the ruling PUP party. Family ties and relationships with the President and his spouses play an important role in determining most of these nominations. The generous salaries and benefits paid to National Assembly members (*deputes*) make a seat in the Assembly very attractive. The nominating process is one way party leaders have of rewarding or punishing supporters.

The National Assembly is an important key to Guinea's political future. However, if it remains weak in authority as it does now, its members will be able to do little more than collect their handsome salaries and ineffectual pronouncements. A recent (October 22, 1998) example of the ineffectual and problematic status of the National Assembly was the suspension of its President, an elderly Peulh, from membership on the executive committee of the ruling party. This action could strengthen the hand of the opposition. The unlikely joining of the President of the National Assembly with the opposition could have significant political consequences.

Evidently, the National Assembly's President prepared a public declaration condemning the manner in which people were being detained and tortured in prison; the government was not pleased. This political event has created tensions within the ruling party which could effect its performance in the upcoming election results. In any event, a genuine strengthening of the autonomy, powers and competency of the National Assembly, as well as more responsiveness to the needs of its constituencies, should be viewed as important indicators of improving democratic governance in Guinea. In this regard, it should be remembered that the Assembly is only three years old and much more time and effort will be required before it reaches desirable performance standards.

One possible constraint to making the National Assembly a stronger and better performing branch of government is the general make-up of the majority of its membership. Most of its key members are veteran politicians and civil servants who have been active in Guinean political affairs for 20 to 30 years. It is striking to note, especially in key National Assembly positions, how many of the occupants held prominent positions in the Touré regime. At least 36 *deputes* (23 in the ruling party and 13 in opposition parties) held high positions under the Touré regime. The advanced age, socialist background and the strong allegiance of many in this group to the President are factors that need to be

kept in mind when contemplating assistance to the National Assembly. Again, ethnicity, family ties and perceived loyalties are probably more important in this regard than their individual political backgrounds.

Grassroots Institutions Suffer

Another important indicator of the strengthening of democracy in Guinea would be a growing role for civil society and local rural government councils (*Communaute Rurale de Developpement* - CRD), and stronger linkages between local constituencies and their National Assembly representatives. There are 303 CRDs in Guinea, serving 3,000 to 5,000 people each. These, along with 38 local urban councils (*Commune Urbaine*) are considered Guinea's basic grassroots republican institutions.

The CRDs were mandated by the 1991 Constitution and their members are elected to serve four-year terms. The last CRD officers were elected in 1992. The four-year mandate for current CRD councils expired in 1996; to date, the government inexplicably has not renewed this mandate. In the meantime, the government is attempting to appoint people to the CRDs. In many districts, the population is resisting these appointments. But, on the other hand, this effort has succeeded in some districts and has meant that ruling party members have been favored as appointees.

Some observers view this development as intentionally giving more time to the ruling PUP party to consolidate its power at the grassroots level. These contradictory efforts on the part of PUP already are causing friction in some collectivities between Sub-Prefects appointed by the President and the elected CRD officers. Some of this friction concerns control of the government and donor resources in the district. This becomes an even more tricky issue in collectivities along the conflict-ridden border zones where the Sub-Prefects are military personnel and refugees outnumber the local inhabitants.

Another problem is that potential candidates for the CRD officer positions must be members of a political party. The Constitution does not allow for independent candidates. Some of the actual CRD officers are not party members nor do they wish to be. CRD elections would probably result in a major effort by the ruling party to have its candidates elected. In many areas, this effort would not be appreciated. Therefore, the potential for the next CRD elections to generate some conflict is great. There is a need for a clearer definition and demarcation of the roles of Sub-Prefects and CRD Presidents. This parallel form of government at the collectivity level, that puts appointed and locally-elected officials at odds with each other, is a natural source of conflict. This clash between a pre-existing local government administrative structure and the one established under the 1991 Constitution should be closely reviewed and solutions found to avoid conflict.

Some observers say that the creation of 303 CRDs at once was a too ambitious and expensive goal, and that CRDs should have been established on a progressive basis. This latter option became impossible, however, as every district began lobbying strongly for its own CRD. An important motivation on the part of local communities to lobby for a CRD was the perception that CRDs were crucial to obtaining resources, including donor assistance. This position has largely proven correct.

In any event, the funding of such a large number of CRDs, and the cost of holding elections for them, have become additional national budget items that the government is having difficulty financing. It is not believed the government has yet budgeted for these elections. Inclusion of the costs of these elections in the national budget would be one sign that the government is serious about holding them.

Some government officials say that CRD elections will be held in 1999; they recognize that it would be good to have these and the *Commune Urbaine* elections before the legislative elections scheduled for 2000. However, these same officials say that the official texts governing the status and operations of CRDs will have to be revised before elections can be held. Determining exactly what has to be done before CRD elections can be held should be an important concern of government and donors alike.

This considerable delay in holding CRD elections has made it more difficult for donor agencies to continue assistance aimed at strengthening the CRDs. The government's slowness in renewing the mandate of the CRDs is a setback to developing grassroots democracy and also raises questions about the seriousness of its commitment to decentralization and instituting democratic principles in Guinea. This also can be said of the government's suspension of the elected mayors of Kissidougou and the Kaloum commune of Conakry. Holding CRD and *Commune Urbaine* elections in 1999 appears necessary to keep democracy on track in Guinea.

The Presidency is Too Powerful

One of the main political challenges facing Guinea is to reduce the power of the Presidency and increase the power of the legislative and judiciary branches. The president currently controls the military, appoints unilaterally all cabinet officials, regional governors, prefects, sub-prefects, judges, and the Central Bank Director. Any decision taken by the National Assembly can easily be overridden or ignored by the President. This imbalance needs to be corrected or Guinea's democracy will become a facade for continuing long-standing, military-backed authoritarian practices in Guinea.

The government is planning some efforts to reform and strengthen the judiciary but, in general, this branch of the government remains under-equipped and its personnel under-paid. An adequately equipped judiciary with well-paid staff will be required before it can operate in an uncorrupt and competent manner. Numerous reports of petty corruption among judges and court clerks erode greatly the credibility of the justice system. Introducing checks to reduce presidential power and influence over the judicial system is also needed before the judiciary can stand as a full branch member of the government.

Presidential Succession Worries

The major near term political concern for Guinea turns around the succession of President Conte. Unless the constitution is amended, President Conte is limited to two, five-year terms and cannot be a candidate for the next presidential elections in 2003. Any change of president will grossly effect the power structure developed under President Conte over the 19 years he will then have been in power. Such a change could have profound implications for Guinea's stability.

Attempts to maintain their positions by elite groups that have benefited from President Conte's long reign will be resented by true democrats and viewed by many as a Soussou plot to maintain power over the government. Other ethnic groups, particularly the Peulh, will feel more than ever that it is their turn to have one of their own occupy the Presidency. Any non-Soussou President will have the uncomfortable task of governing from Conakry, a mostly Soussou city, which is deep within the traditional territory of the Soussou, after 19 years of rule by a Soussou President.

President Conte and his government need to prepare early for the smooth succession to the next president and accept that this president could belong to an opposition party. Part of these preparations will concern the oversight and reorganization of the military and increasing the powers of the National Assembly. Another helpful part of these preparations would be a concerted effort to lessen the "personality cult" of the president.

One fear is that the untimely demise of President Conte would force confronting this succession issue at an earlier date. The constitution calls for the President of the National Assembly (suspended from the ruling party executive committee on October 22) to replace the president in the event of his death and the calling of elections within 60 days. The practicality of such a succession and its implications for the stability of Guinea should be an ongoing part of contingency planning.

The Role Played by the Touré Legacy and Culture

Although complex and difficult to describe, some problems facing the development of democracy in Guinea are related to cultural/social values and historical background. Any brief treatment, as in this case, of these factors risks generalization and "stereotypes" which could be misleading. Therefore, the reader is cautioned not to accept point blank the following paragraphs without further reflection and study. The following is included because it reflects what many Guineans interviewed have said. Accordingly, there are some aspects in the following that are worth pondering. Again, popular perception may be more important than reality.

Since life for most Guineans is now generally better than during the Touré regime, they see no reason to complain. Except for a few incidents, those who remained in Guinea (an estimated one-fourth of the population departed) during 26 years of repressive Stalinistic rule under Sekou Touré demonstrated their capacity to submit to totalitarian leadership that brooked no dissent. Much of this reluctance to demand rights as citizens and take risks to defend these rights persists. Fear of the authorities and crossing government officials and their collaborators remains a strong, in-grained behavioral motivation for many Guineans. Therefore, many believe that Guineans have an extraordinarily high tolerance level for authority.

Troubles in neighboring countries have reinforced this tendency for Guineans to remain quiet and patient with the status quo. Only major violations of the dignity of important leaders and/or important instances of "opportunism" will propel Guineans into mass action. Before taking any perceived risks, Guineans are likely to ask themselves what is in it for them and their families. In the past, taking risks

in the political arena have not paid off, and they still do not.

It is important also to keep in mind the kind of traditional political and social arrangements that existed in Guinea in pre-colonial times and which continue to prevail to some extent today. These arrangements often followed strict hierarchical lines that were largely determined by the clan or caste one was born into. This was particularly true for the Peulh and Malinke, who adopted Islam long before ethnic groups living in the Maritime Region. Strict obedience to hereditary leaders was the norm among members of these two ethnic groups. The influence of Islam and of historic great African empires was felt most heavily in these more northern zones of Guinea.

This contrasts with the social organization of the Soussous, who were pushed along with other ethnic groups toward the coast by Peulhs migrating into the Fouta Djallon from further north because of pressures from an expanding Mali Empire in the 14th and 15th centuries. This migratory process resulted in the dislocation of the former Soussou Kingdom and the habitation by many of its subjects in small villages and hamlets governed by local chiefs. Some observers suggest that the more diffuse and decentralized societal structure which evolved among coastal Soussou may lend itself more naturally to democracy. The same can probably be said even more strongly for the minority ethnic groups living in the Forest Region.

Also of some importance is that the coastal people were the first to come in contact with Europeans and be subjected to colonization by the French. The different histories of how the inhabitants of Guinea's major geographic regions dealt with French rule perhaps provide some clues to the differences between these regions. Certainly, each region takes pride in the manner it resisted French rule.

The manner Peulh leaders and, particularly, Malinke leaders and their followers fought French troops in the early days of the colonization period remain defining moments of glory for these groups. This proud "warrior/fighter" tradition continues to a certain extent today and could be related to the greater tendency toward violent protest in Haute Guinée. The loss of political power and the resources that come with that power probably encourage this tendency.

One factor which unites all Guineans today is their pride over saying "non" to joining the French Community in 1958 and opting for unilateral independence. The abrupt and rude manner all French nationals left Guinea in 1958, taking with them everything they could and destroying part of what they could not take, has not been forgotten by Guineans. In this regard, any close association today between national leaders and the French would be viewed negatively by the population. This has definite implications for needed French assistance and investment.

While Guinea has distinct ethnic-linguistic regions, and populations which coincide to a certain extent with each of these regions, the large degree of the mixing of these populations should not be overlooked. These different peoples have been in close contact for centuries with extensive intermarrying. The practice of intermarriage continues today and lends itself to Guineans knowing each other very well. In reference to this practice, one of the persons interviewed in Conakry suggested that a factor that helped Guinea to remain stable is the willingness of Guinean men and

women to marry individuals from other ethnic groups.

These different traditional cultural tendencies and the varying historical backgrounds require considering the process of introducing democratic values and practices. Also to be considered is the impact of the colonial period on the way Guineans think and behave today. In this regard, it must be remembered that for almost 15 years after independence ties between France and Guinea were severed.

Guinea was isolated from most of the Western world. It was only in the 1970s that Guinea renewed ties with France; full ties between these two countries did not truly begin until after the death of Sekou Touré in 1984. Guinea's early break with the former colonial power did much to dilute the impact of colonization on Guinea. Accordingly, this break also reduced the relevance of the colonial period on Guinea's current make-up when compared to other Francophone countries.

While the impact of colonization 40 years after gaining independence from France may not be so relevant today, the harshness of the 26-year Touré regime remains so. Under the Touré regime every effort was made to forcefully obliterate the traditional authority structure and cultural practices, and breakdown tribal divisions. This effort largely succeeded, leaving Guinea without the vibrant traditional authority system that plays such an important governance role in many other West African countries. On the other hand, the draconian political and social measures taken by the Touré regime are said to have forged a strong sense of national identity and unity among the Guinea people which is a positive factor today in maintaining peace and stability in Guinea.

Overcoming the legacy of the Touré regime will still take a long time. Perhaps even more difficult to overcome are widespread fatalistic beliefs that hold everything as preordained and therefore unchangeable. The often commented on high patience and tolerance levels of the Guinean people when it comes to submitting themselves to authority and suffering will continue to present challenges to developing a vibrant democracy in Guinea. While the seeds of democracy have been planted, and there is probably no turning back, many years may be required before the real fruits of democracy are savored in Guinea. Getting Guineans to take the risks they see involved with exercising their democratic rights will take time and much effort, especially if these risks mean confronting the existing power structure.

Guineans Abroad

It is estimated that there are two to three million people (near 25 percent of the total population) of Guinean citizenship or origin are living in other countries. These "overseas" Guineans represent a strong political force. Their absentee vote (estimated at 400,000) in the upcoming elections will be important. Government reluctance to take the steps needed to assure the registration of all of these overseas voters indicates that it may fear the political tendencies of this block of voters.

Also of note again is that one of the leaders of the two major political parties, Alpha Conde, lives in France and runs his political operations from there. It is expected that Conde will return to Guinea during the November 14 to December 13, 1998, campaign period. The French government has ruled that Guineans residing in France can only vote at one location, the Guinean Embassy in Paris. This

could greatly reduce the number of votes of Guineans living abroad.

It is said by many, particularly those who reside in Guinea, that these overseas Guineans think that the experience they have obtained abroad better suits them for the management of Guinea's affairs. Guineans who have always remained in Guinea resent this notion. Many of those who remained believe the suffering they endured under the Touré regime gives them a greater right to control political and governmental affairs in Guinea.

In the past, efforts by overseas Guineans to play a heavy hand in running the government have been strongly rejected by the resident political powers. Under the first government following the death of Sekou Touré, several expatriate Guineans were given ministerial positions, but conflicts which ensued between them and old-line politicians and military personnel resulted in their departure. This friction between the Guinean "disapora" and the resident power structure has quieted down but remains a factor worth monitoring.

It is unfortunate that Guinea cannot find a better way of tapping the large human resource pool which Guineans living abroad represent. One problem in doing this is providing the kind of salaries, benefits and living conditions needed to attract home well-trained Guineans. Another problem is getting Guineans at home to accept management by Guineans from abroad and giving up plum jobs to them.

REFUGEES AND NEIGHBORING VIOLENCE

Refugees fleeing armed conflict in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau have added to Guinea's development burdens. This is particularly true in Guinea's Forest Region and Forecariah prefecture that border conflict areas in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is in these areas where 574,541 refugees were reported in October 1998 by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). This number is 200,000 higher than what was reported in June 1998.

This figure does not include the thousands of Guineans who have been forced to leave their homes in Sierra Leone and Liberia or those who have fled these countries to settle spontaneously within Guinea. Additionally, about 12,000 refugees are reported to be along Guinea's northern border with Guinea-Bissau. As long as such a large number of refugees and displaced remain on Guinean soil, development in the areas where they are located will be difficult and security issues will be a much higher concern.

In many ways Guinea has been a generous host to these refugees. Close ethnic and family ties between Guineans and foreign nationals in these border areas have helped with the accommodation of this large number of refugees. The memory of when many of their relatives took refuge in these neighboring countries during the Touré regime helps Guineans understand the refugees plight. Bloody conflicts among their neighbors also serve as sobering lessons to Guineans, supporting their natural desire to maintain peace in Guinea. One common comment of Guineans is that they must keep the peace in Guinea, as they can no longer take refuge with their war-torn neighbors.

Helping keep Guinea stable in a region fraught with conflict should be a top priority for donors. Guinea's stability has already done much to keep regional conflicts from spreading. Terminating these

conflicts in a definitive manner as quickly as possible should be high on the donors' development agenda. In particular, ending the seven-year long conflict in Sierra Leone is overdue. Negative influences from this violent conflict are already having an undesirable impact on Guinea's social fabric. Stopping the conflict in Sierra Leone, and maintaining the precarious peace in Liberia, are critically important development objectives for Guinea.

Conflict Cessation in Sierra Leone: Vital to Guinea's Development

The conflict in Sierra Leone and cross-border military incursions engendered by it have high potential for destabilizing areas along Guinea's long border with this country and consuming a disproportionate share of Guinea's scarce resources. Much attention should be paid to a possible upcoming dry season offensive on the part of ECOMOG, with strong Guinean military collaboration, to finish the war against Sierra Leonean rebels. This final push to capture the territory still in rebels hands and physically to eliminate them could push warfare into Guinea, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives and the destruction of many homes.

The resulting chaos and displacement of local inhabitants and refugees this planned offensive would cause should be anticipated by relief agencies in their contingency plans. In any event, genuine development efforts in this region cannot go forward until the fighting ends, rebel ringleaders are killed or captured, disarmament occurs and the large mass of refugees are repatriated or resettled. Plans for achieving all of this should be completed already or on the drawing boards of those agencies concerned with such matters.

Guinea's generosity and cross-border ethnic links aside, the number of refugees is too high; the longer they stay in camp locations the harder it will be to repair the damage they cause. Certainly, the refugees prefer staying in camps where their welfare and security is assured by international relief agencies and the Government of Guinea instead of returning to their ransacked villages. But the prolonged continuation of their presence in Guinea, particularly in areas where they outnumber the Guinean population, is untenable and a threat to Guinea's stability.

Action needs to be taken on an urgent basis either to repatriate these refugees or to resettle them within Guinea. The institutionalization of refugee camp life cannot be allowed. Providing refugees with free food, shelter, education and health care while the indigenous population suffers from the lack of these services can generate conflict between these two populations. Also, caring for the needs of displaced Guineans who have lived all or most of their lives in neighboring countries needs attention. In this regard, relief agencies should make greater efforts to provide some services to Guineans suffering from the effects of cross-border conflict.

Large Refugee Population Dims Guinea's Development Prospects

The presence of large number of refugees also has led to a rise in crime and competition for farmland while ravaging the natural resource base. The farms of local inhabitants along Guinea's long, uncontrollable and very porous border with Sierra Leone are constantly being raided by refugees or

meandering rebels. Social services, road and water infrastructures are buckling under the added strain. An increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases has been noted. The added environmental and health consequences of increasing substantially in a brief period the population density of the refugee-impacted areas are considerable.

Fortunately, the number of refugees in Guinea from Sierra Leone has not grown in the past couple of months. Evidently, those people inhabiting a 30 to 50 kilometer band inside Sierra Leone have already entered Guinea and those living beyond this band who might come to Guinea are unable to traverse this "scorched-earth, no-man's" land occupied by ECOMOG and rebel forces. It is important to note that 90 percent of the Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea come from a relatively small diamond-producing area in Sierra Leone. Bringing peace and security to this area would go a long way in permitting these refugees to go home. Unfortunately, it appears that corruption surrounding the smuggling of diamonds from this area by all sides involved in the conflict could serve to protract this conflict.

Guinea now has more refugees than any other country in Africa. Their presence is making the Forest Region less livable for the local population and the brutality they have experienced is having an undesirable socio-psychological impact on Guineans. The potential for arms used in these conflicts to enter into the hands of Guineans is high. This could result in a rise in armed banditry within Guinea that has not yet been observed. It could also lead to an undesirable trade in arms and corruption of Guinea military troops who come into contact with rebels. Associated with this could be a rise in drug trade and the smuggling of minerals and commercial goods. Already, the loss of trade and custom receipts for Guinea is substantial. Fortunately, there is no sign of the formation of any private militia in Guinea.

Those areas where large numbers of refugees are situated should be designated special development zones. This should take into account not only the impact of refugees and cross-border conflicts on these areas, but also the impact of the presence of Guinean troops and relief agencies with their resources. The loss of trade with Guinea from these neighboring countries because of conflict should be analyzed. This includes examining the number of jobs created by these agencies and their impact on the local economy. The prospect that the long protraction of these conflicts could make it hard for Guinea to continue its arrangements with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund should be examined.

A "post-crisis" impact assessment on the areas abandoned by the departing refugees and relief agencies would be of interest. This should assist with the drafting of a "post-crisis" rehabilitation plan for the effected areas. It might include examining the impact of continued crisis in the region on plans to build a railway and the development of rich iron resources. Moving from the current situation in these areas to a post-refugee one will be challenging. Keeping relief-to-development linkages in mind

will be important. Getting this part of Guinea back on the sustainable development track is essential to the overall development of Guinea.

EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND JOB CREATION

Too Few Jobs and Low Salaries Contribute to an Unhappy Guinea

The most common complaints heard in Guinea fifteen years ago were about the high price of rice, Guinea's principal staple, the lack of jobs, and existing jobs paying too little. Today, these complaints are being expressed by more voices than before. The problem is worse now as the population is much larger and more people than ever are dependant on those making an income. Exacerbating this is the fact that increased numbers of Guineans are graduating from school without jobs available for them. Job creation, the real litmus test of development, is very far from reaching an acceptable level in Guinea.

It is commonly said by educators and labor union representatives in Conakry that few members of the last ten university graduating classes (approximately 22,000 students) have found paying jobs. Added to this is an even larger number of technical school graduates. Less than 40 percent of those graduating from primary schools each year pass the exam required to enter the secondary level. In 1998, this amounted to nearly 40,000 students. The high age at which many Guineans start school and high class repetition rate (e.g., 39 percent repeat the sixth grade) means that many of these students are over 13 years of age.

This large and growing mass of educated and undereducated, unemployed youth, represents a serious destabilizing element for Guinea over the long term. While the impressive progress Guinea has achieved in improving and expanding its primary and secondary education systems is very laudable, progress could backfire if more jobs are not created. Jobs depend greatly on increasing the level of private investment in Guinea.

It is reported that many of the primary school graduates gravitate to urban areas where problems in housing, sanitation and crime already abound. Rapid urbanization (6 percent annual growth), particularly in Conakry where over 15 percent of Guinea's population lives, contains destabilizing elements of its own. Urban squalor and high population density in some areas can be the source of friction. Improving urban living conditions and finding outlets for many of the idle young men can be helpful in defusing tension in these areas. It is obvious that these young men are natural recruits for organized crime and politically motivated youth gangs.

Preparing young people in a way that increases their chances of finding a job and being productive citizens should be a key hallmark of the education system. Otherwise, the upcoming younger generation will be not as tolerant and long-suffering as their parents. Gauging the aspirations and needs of the younger generation should be an important consideration of Guinea's politicians and development planners.

Also of importance is the provision of good role models for young Guineans to follow. The absence of proper role models for whom the younger generation is inspired to emulate represents a negative factor that is often underestimated in Africa. Civic education efforts can work to reinforce the high sense of patriotism and national unity in Guinea. These special Guinean qualities, along with the dominant Islamic religion, are often noted as factors contributing to peace and stability in Guinea.

The Costs of Widespread Poverty

For those lucky enough to find employment, wages are often insufficient to cover the cost of basic essentials. The average salary of a civil servant is less than \$100 per month. The average civil servant has seven to nine dependents. Paying basic living costs (food, medicine, clothes, rent, etc.) is a multiple of this salary amount. The minimum quantity of rice required to sustain this family for a month represents over a third of the average civil servant's salary.

With a rising cost of living and declining purchasing power, there are bound to be protests. Taking action to prevent these protests before they happen should be a major concern of the government and donors. On the other hand, the prospects for augmenting salaries, and those of the military, are bleak. Part of the economic structural adjustment agreement is to keep salaries frozen and a ceiling on the number of civil servants.

This inability to increase salaries has already caused the government some headaches. One important example of this was the two-week long teacher strike in April 1997, which led President Conte to reinstate a 8 percent pay raise for all civil servants. As long as the real buying power of salaries continues to decrease, it would not be unusual to see similar protests in the future.

Another factor weighing on the poor employment scene in Guinea is that over 40,000 civil servants lost their jobs since the economic restructuring began in the mid-1980s. While streamlining Guinea's bloated civil service was necessary, it has added an additional group to an already large, potentially unstable, mass of unemployed. The downturn in the mining sector has also meant that the number of jobs created in the private sector over this same period has been negligible. The addition of these previously employed people to the large mass of new, educated job seekers makes for a potentially volatile, highly competitive mix. Overt nepotism could be a spark that could make this volatile mix explode.

Extensive Poverty in the Rural Majority Holds Guinea Back

This important and more vocal mass of educated, mainly urbanized people is, however, very small numerically when compared to the vast majority of Guineans who have never held a salaried job and never will. Over 70 percent of Guinea's population is rural, dependent upon farming and/or pastoral activities for their livelihood. In general, this group consists of subsistence farmers. Alleviating poverty in Guinea in a significant manner means, in essence, raising rural living standards. The high poverty among rural inhabitants and unemployed urbanites represents one of the most important long-term threats to peace and stability in Guinea.

Fortunately, many poor families are able to make ends meet only with remittances they receive from family members living abroad. (It is estimated that two to three million Guineans live abroad). But hundreds of these "overseas" Guineans return each year, adding to the rolls of the unemployed and unstable, under-financed households. These Guinean "returnees" represent a potentially destabilizing element.

As recently stated by Gus Speth, UNDP Administrator, "human poverty is a condition as abhorrent as slavery and as repugnant as violence, and ... poverty is the most fundamental denial of human rights." With an estimated 40 percent of Guinea's population living in conditions of absolute poverty (i.e. on less than \$0.80 per day), Guinea is an extreme case even by African standards. Reversing at a faster pace the downward trend in the real value of household incomes in Guinea must occur in the near term if Guinea is to maintain its peaceful status.

Guinea cannot remain stable over the long run if the number of people lacking viable employment, adequate food, water, shelter, education and social services grows. Given that nearly half of Guinea's estimated 7.5 million people are below 15 years of age, satisfying these essential needs will become increasingly difficult in the near future. This youthful structure of the population and its fast growth (3 percent per year), which results in a doubling of the population in about 24 years, contain very destabilizing elements.

Even if Guinea is able to sustain a consistent annual economic growth rate of over 5 percent for 50 years, it will be difficult to graduate from low-income to middle income status. Normally, a consistent annual economic growth rate (3 percent) plus a minimum two percent is required for many years before there is an appreciable effect on alleviating poverty significantly. In any event, nothing is better for preventing instability and alleviating social tensions than economic prosperity.

THE ECONOMY AND LIBERALIZATION

Economically, Guinea is achieving more progress than most African countries. Guinea distinguishes itself by having had an economic growth rate of between 4 and 5 percent from 1991 to 1997, a low inflation rate (less than 2 percent in 1997), a stable exchange rate and reasonable interest rates. Keeping inflation low is one way of keeping some Guineans above the poverty line. Guinea's foreign exchange reserves, the equivalent of three months of imports, is also higher than many other African countries. Guinea is also doing a good job of managing its external debt load of about \$3.1 billion (80 percent of GDP).

Servicing this high debt burden does, however, consume 13 percent to 15 percent (\$130 to \$150 million) of Guinea's annual national budget. This large outflow from the national treasury reduces funds available for social services and the development of the kind of "safety nets" that Guinean society needs to survive in times of difficulty. The absence of these "safety nets" contributes, inter alia, to the kind of insecurity and suffering that increases crime and corruption. In this regard, making sure top politicians know well in advance that they have a good and sure retirement benefits program could help

improve governance and prospects for stability.

Although Guinea is managing its current debt burden well, and projections indicate this burden will diminish slightly over the coming years, steps to reduce this large debt would greatly benefit Guinea's development and stability. As long as a large debt burden exists, it is difficult to see how Guinea can progress at the rate required to raise satisfactorily the living standards of its people. Further substantial debt relief could have important benefits in terms of preventing social unrest and instability.

Guinea's economy depends too much on growth in the mining sector and the world prices for the minerals (bauxite, alumina, gold, diamonds) that Guinea produces. Bauxite mining and alumina production alone provide over 80 percent of Guinea's foreign exchange. Whether Guinea can diversify more of its economy and increase the non-mining percentage of the economy in a significant manner will be a major factor in determining Guinea's future.

High Development Potential But High Poverty Persists

Given Guinea's rich agricultural, marine and hydroelectric resource potential, such economic diversification is clearly possible. However, reconciling the contradictions between Guinea's high development potential and the persistent high poverty of its people will remain a challenge well into the next century. Hopefully, Guinea will not always be one of Africa's "countries of the future."

A main key to realizing Guinea's undeniable potential is increasing substantially the growth of private investment, currently about 15 percent of GDP. Increasing private investment, especially from foreign sources, will depend greatly on creating a conducive and predictable investment environment. Peaceful December elections and the cessation of hostilities in neighboring countries are critical to helping create this environment and permit the regional economic integration needed for Guinea's development. The level of private investment should be an important indicator of Guinea's economic health and prospects for continued stability.

Currently, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund consider Guinea one of their better African performers. The vast economic structural adjustment program that Guinea has been pursuing to one degree or another since the mid-1980s is designed to lead progressively to the alleviation of poverty. The primary objective of the current, 1998-2000, phase of this program is to continue to lay the groundwork for sustained and diversified economic growth based on a larger role for the private sector.

However, this progressive transition from a command economy to an open-market economy has meant additional suffering for many Guineans, not less. As noted above, this necessary economic liberalization process has required a mass reduction in government jobs (from 91,000 in the late 1980s to 50,722 today) and the closing or privatization of numerous state-owned enterprises. This large contingent of "newly jobless," and largely urban-based group, represents a new element of instability for Guinea. Currently, a large number of laid-off government workers who were rehired, but remain unpaid, are besieging the Ministry of Finance for overdue payments. Financial constraints, which lead

to delays in paying civil servant salaries, could result in violent strikes and protests.

The Promise of Economic Reform Not Yet Fulfilled

The promise of economic reform remains great but so far most Guineans have yet to benefit from them; it is likely that many more years will pass before reform benefits are widely appreciated by the Guinean population. This raises the question of how long the new generation of Guineans can patiently wait for the reform process to benefit them while they see no improvement in their low living standards. This patience could begin to erode if it is perceived that the economic liberalization process is mainly profiting foreign companies or "elitist" interests. The perception that Guinea is moving from a state-run economy to one dominated by foreign companies, where the main role of the average Guinean is to provide cheap labor, is latently destabilizing.

To avoid problems in this area, the government should make a special effort to explain carefully to its people how and when reforms will benefit the average Guinean household. This approach would be especially helpful with regard to Guinea's increasingly strike-minded labor unions and employee organizations. The government and donors need to consider more activities that lessen any transitional negative impacts of structural adjustment on the poorer levels of Guinean society. Donors must consider carefully the short- and long-term impacts on stability of their interventions. All this will be helpful in dissipating the growth of any disillusionment with Guinea's economic and political liberalization process.

Making special efforts to raise the living standards of Guinea's poorest groups, and narrowing at an acceptable pace the gap between the 20 percent of Guinea's population that controls 77 percent of national income and the 40 percent that control only about 4 percent of this income, is fundamentally important to maintaining stability in Guinea. This inequitable distribution of national wealth is perhaps a more important factor than the general low level of wealth at the household level. Reducing this gap is necessary to prevent the creation of a two-class society where only a rich elite can afford a good education and social services. Measuring this "gap" and the studying the dynamics causing it, on a periodic basis, could be a useful part of "stability" monitoring.

Liberalization of the economy also opens the door to increased commercial rivalry that may threaten the peace. As more Guineans enter the private sector and the competition for market share or niches increases, it can be expected that some friction will occur. In Guinea's case, there has been in the past some friction between Malinke businessmen who enjoyed a favored status under the Touré regime and wealthy Peulh businessmen, who have returned to Guinea after many years in exile. Furthermore, given Guinea's past troubled history with France, the development of strong links with French business interests would be resented by the general population.

The growing involvement of Guinea's new political elite in business affairs also adds a competitive element. Given that this new elite is primarily from the Soussou ethnic group, this has led to a number of partnerships between traditionally savvy Peulh businessmen and Soussou officials, who in the past were not known for involvement in commercial affairs. This Peulh-Soussou business connection is a

strong force in the economy. This is resented by the Malinke who, in general, have had less opportunity to take advantage of lucrative deals that involve the government and/or its officials. A commonly heard refrain in Conakry is that it takes Peulh money and the backing of the military to be politically successful.

Again, it is rare that Peulhs will work economically or politically with Malinkes. However, Malinkes have been able to continue their control of the artisanal diamond trade. This is facilitated by the fact that diamonds are mostly found in traditional Malinke homeland areas. Some of the richest people in Guinea are Malinke diamond and precious stone traders. Most of the other wealthy families in Guinea are Peulh traders. The remaining wealthy families are either Lebanese or Soussou who gained wealth through corrupt activities during the Touré regime or holding positions of power in the second republic (1984-1993).

This increased competition also can lead to bribery and other corrupt practices. Increased competition between indigenous and foreign or non-African (e.g. Lebanese) can, at times, also have undesirable consequences. The consequences that political change can have on this commercial competition and the control of resources, and vice versa, strike at the heart of political and economic life in Guinea. It is clear that implementing conjointly consequential programs of economic and political liberalization after 35 years (1958-1993) of authoritarian regimes is an inherently destabilizing process.

HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Low Health Status and High Fertility Contribute to Guinea's Poverty

Despite many improvements in the health sector, and the many good results achieved in recent years, health indicators remain surprisingly low, even when compared to other African countries performing less well economically. Infant (153/1000), child (252/1000) and maternal mortality (666/100,000) rates remain among the highest in the world. Life expectancy remains low at 43 years. Over 65 percent of the adult population is illiterate, 60 percent of the population does not have access to health services, 45 percent do not have access to safe water and 50 percent lack adequate sanitation. Only 34 percent of school age children (less for girls) have access to primary education. The nutritional status of the population is poor. The 1994 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Guinea last. In 1996, Guinea ranked 160 out of 174 countries.

Complicating this unhealthy profile is a fast growing, youthful population. Unless the fertility rate of around six children per woman of child-bearing age (15 to 45 years of age) can be reduced, the population will continue to grow rapidly, outstripping development resources. The only way to reduce markedly in the near term this high population growth rate is to increase substantially the use of modern contraceptives. Although increasing at an appreciable rate (from 1.3 percent in 1992 to between 4 and 6 percent in 1996), the contraceptive prevalence rate in Guinea remains among the lowest in Africa. Measuring progress in reducing the total fertility rate of Guinean women is an important indicator of long-term stability.

The prime mortal disease in Guinea remains malaria. Pneumonia and respiratory illnesses are on the rise. Remarkably, the HIV/AIDS sero-prevalence rate remains under 2 percent (lower than most West African countries and very low when compared to over 20 percent in countries in east and Southern Africa). There is no room for complacency, however, as the number of AIDS cases reported is showing a substantial rate of increase. It is also feared that the arrival in Guinea of large number of refugees could increase the spread of AIDS and other diseases. Cholera is endemic to Guinea (the first cholera case in Sub-Saharan Africa was reported in Guinea in 1970) and epidemics occur on a regular basis. Using the Ambassador's access to \$25,000 from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), is one way the Mission can assist with such epidemics.

Sustainable Development Hampered by Food and Environmental Problems

Compared to most African countries, food security in Guinea is good in spite of low nutritional levels. This food security position is, however, weakened by the traditional preference to eat mostly rice. Most Guineans do not consider having eaten unless they have rice. This dependence on rice is unfortunate as many other crops could easily be grown in Guinea's favorable agricultural environment. Guinea's good agricultural condition helps to relieve the suffering caused by high poverty.

Guinea certainly has the potential to grow all the food it needs, including rice. With regard to the latter crop, it is alarming to see that annual rice imports continue to grow, reaching over 290,000 MT a year (imported rice remains much cheaper than locally produced rice). Guineans risk some instability by their inability to diversify more their diet and to reduce their dependence on rice imports. Keeping rice prices low becomes an important political concern and this, in turn, could lead to an undesirable subsidization of rice prices. This tendency could lead to a structural food deficit that will be hard to remedy in the future. For certain, a sudden hike in rice prices would cause much civil discontent.

It will be difficult to sustain development in Guinea unless significant environmental problems are addressed. These problems concern a wide variety of areas, including the unhealthy conditions of urban areas; lack of trash collection; waste water treatment; lack of safe drinking water; mining excavation and pollution; soil erosion; deforestation; and, declining fishing resources. Of particular concern in Guinea is its central highlands region, which is the headwater source of three of West Africa's major rivers. Protecting this unique watershed area is, therefore, of critical importance to not only Guinea but to most of West Africa. In this regard, the reported destruction of 36,000 hectares of forest a year in Guinea is alarming.

Environmentally unsound and unsustainable agricultural practices are increasing competition for farmland and lowering crop yields. This is progressively making Guinea's rural masses even more poor and unstable. Conflicts over land use and between herders and farmers are on the increase. Incidents of conflict among artisanal miners or between them and industrial miners over mining land rights, particularly in the gold bearing areas around Sigui, have been reported over the past few years. The expropriation of land without compensation for the new Ashanti Goldfields mine in this area continues to be a contentious issue among local inhabitants.

While most of these conflicts are handled by traditional and local government authorities, growing land pressure will make this more difficult. Also, exacerbating land disputes may be the decision to forcefully apply the Land Code Act of 1992. The government texts required to implement this act have not yet been approved. The eventual application of these long-delayed texts will accent the need to follow property rights issues as an area which could potentially cause some instability. The same can also be said of the 1995 urban plan for Conakry that remains stalled in part because of the property interests of prominent Guineans.

The added environmental problems, perhaps irreversible, being caused by the arrival of large numbers of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in a relatively short period have already been mentioned. In

addition to this mass of humanity, there are the thousands of Guineans who have been obliged to return from these conflict-ridden countries and others where crackdowns in recent years on foreign immigrants have occurred. This large group of "returnees" is adding to land pressures in the rural areas and to the household congestion already existing in overburdened urban areas. As many of these returnees were obliged to return without their belongings or any money, they represent an added element of stress.

A national census was completed in 1997 but its results have not yet been released. Some observers say the government is waiting until after the December elections to report the census results. Obtaining these results and an updated census of refugees and displaced persons (estimated at 10 percent of the population currently inhabiting Guinea) and the number of recent returnees would be very useful. The last census was conducted in 1983 and, therefore, is not of much use. Updated census information would, *inter alia*, be useful in providing the statistics needed to establish the baseline information required to establish voting districts and the voting-age population. Publishing the national census taken in 1997 should be a high priority.

HUMAN RIGHTS, CRIME AND JUSTICE

According to the U.S. Embassy's September 1998 human rights report, Guinea's record in this important domain is poor. Cases of torture and abuse of detainees by security personnel remain all too common. Many of these detainees are arbitrarily arrested, denied access to attorneys and kept in inhumane prison conditions, sometimes resulting in death. Some of those detained simply disappear, never to be seen again. Governmental restrictions on the freedom of speech, assembly and press occur frequently. The electoral process and the judiciary are subject to executive branch influence. The government owns and operates all electronic media and has prohibited the installation of non-governmental broadcast media. Security forces, which are generally viewed with disdain and fear by the public, often play an oppressive and corrupt role in the daily lives of Guineans.

Poor Human Rights Record Damages Democratic Image

Overall, Guinea's human rights record is appalling, especially for a country which claims to be striving to adhere to democratic principles. Without improvements in this record, there are bound to be incidents of conflict as citizens begin to demand their rights and revolt against ill- and unjust treatment.

Monitoring Guinea's human rights record should be an important part of trying to forecast potential instability. Improvements in this poor record should be an important agenda item in government-donor discussions. The government's failure to improve significantly this record in the near term will undermine the foundations of its fledgling democracy, discourage development assistance and private investment, and add fuel to the conglomerate of sources of instability existing in Guinea.

It should not be surprising that under the circumstances prevailing in Guinea that the incidence of crime is rising. However, when compared to other African countries, the crime level, particularly armed crime, is low and manageable. If it can continue to find ways to keep the crime level under control while respecting the rights of its citizens, Guinea will have another favorably distinguishing

characteristic.

Also of concern are reports of Conakry becoming a transit center for the onward shipment of drugs originating in Asia. While Conakry has not yet become a major drug transit point, examining more closely its potential to become such a center may be an important step toward preventing the growth of drug trade in Guinea. In this regard, drug enforcement agents should scrutinize the presence of Nigerian drug traders and their relations with local officials and security officers. It cannot be excluded that the level of corruption and weak enforcement capacities prevailing in Guinea creates an attractive environment for international drug traffickers. This could also lead to Guinea becoming a place for drug lords to launder their ill-gotten funds.

Judicial Reforms Good But Not Enough

The Government of Guinea's recent efforts and plans to reform and improve the judicial system should be noted. This includes the establishment in June 1998 of a special arbitration court to resolve business disputes. The government is also looking to revise all their legal codes. This revision should help expedite judicial proceedings. It has already completed a revised penal code. It is also making budgetary modifications to permit improving working conditions and provide training for judicial system personnel.

While all these reforms are laudable, it will take some years of good performance before endemic judicial corruption ends and a wary citizenry has much trust in the judicial system. Moreover, the independence of the judiciary will always be in jeopardy as long as the executive branch continues to use its influence to modify the outcome of legal cases. Part of job in this regard will be getting government agents to adhere to the letter, if not the spirit, of the 1991 Constitution. This process can be helped by the conduct of educational campaigns designed to raise the awareness of the citizenry of their rights and government officials about the limits of their authority. In any event, monitoring the independence and competency of the judiciary should be one more variable of Guinea's complex development process.

OTHER FACTORS THAT MAY BE CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Islamic Fundamentalism

While it is claimed that the Muslim faith, to which over 85 percent of Guineans adhere to, is one important factor that helps keep Guinea stable, there are some varying practices of this faith which represent destabilizing elements in today's Guinea. There are different Muslim brotherhoods in Guinea which have had some clashes over beliefs and practices. More important are reports of Guineans who have had training at Islamic schools in northern African or the Middle East who are returning to Guinea to form Shi'ite sects. It is rumored that some of these sects are receiving assistance from foreign sources, including those in Iran.

The government and Islamic leaders in Guinea have condemned these groups. One complementary reason cited for the government razing of the Kaparo-Rail neighborhood in the Ratoma area of

Conakry was to destroy the base of some of these Shi'ite groups. In any event, if such groups are forming in Guinea with the support of foreigners, this should be of some concern to the government and donors. The presence of members of international terrorist groups should also be of concern.

Foreign Interests

The nasty manner in which France abandoned Guinea in 1958 when Sekou Touré said his famous "non" to President DeGaulle still makes Guineans prefer working with those of other nationalities. This creates some tension as the French look to expand their interests and Guineans look elsewhere for assistance and investment. In the past, French interests have sometimes worked to sabotage the investments of non-French investors. The recent scandal surrounding corruption schemes with French filling stations, Elf and Total, adds to Guinean suspicions about French intentions. This attitude does, however, make Guinea an exceptional African Francophone country where American friendship and investment are preferred.

Under this heading should also be placed a difficult to describe influence of foreign individuals on government officials. The frequent contact of top officials with non-nationals, or quasi-nationals, with more than one passport and mixed allegiances should be watched. It is not uncommon in Africa that individuals with unsavory backgrounds and intentions not in the real interest of Guinea attach themselves to people in positions of power. Guinea is no exception to this phenomenon.

Natural Disasters

While Guinea is more likely to be troubled by man-made disasters, it does have some history of natural disasters that require emergency responses. Important among these is a record of seismic activity. In early 1984, Guinea experienced an earthquake in the Gaoual area which caused loss of life and destroyed hundreds of houses. A reoccurrence of such an event should not be ruled out. In this regard, it would be of interest to obtain more information on the potential for seismic activity in Guinea.

Other than infrequent earthquakes, other natural disasters which merit mention are health epidemics, violent coastal storms and pest attacks on crops. Guinea's experience with natural disasters has been relatively mild when compared to most other African countries. In particular, the absence of a cyclic record of serious food shortages or famine in Guinea distinguishes it from many other African countries.

LIKELY CRISIS SCENARIOS AND RESPONSES

It is difficult to anticipate crises in Africa. Many crises occur suddenly without warning following an irrational act that could not have been foreseen. Often these unplanned acts add the additional ingredient needed to raise tensions to the level where people are pushed over the edge. Therefore, working to keep social tensions low is the most important way of reducing the likelihood of violent confrontations.

Doing this means, *inter alia*, the conduct of much public dialogue and the sharing of essential information widely among the population. Stripping the force of the rumor mill and putting a stop to the constant stream of misinformation (the source of much wrongful tension in Guinea) is of special importance in Guinea's case. The growth in true participatory democracy is one way of achieving this.

The practice of democracy, by nature, lessens the potential for conflict.

The following fictitious scenarios are intended to stimulate thinking about possible crises which could arise to effect peace and stability in Guinea and what, if anything, the Mission could do to prevent or mitigate such crises. The Mission may want to use these scenarios and others to do "game-playing" exercises. The best course in many of these cases is to maintain a constant, open and frank dialogue with top government officials and opposition figures, encouraging them to follow an ever improving course of good and wise governance. Strong and frank pro-active diplomacy may be the best tool the United States Government has to positively effect events in Guinea.

SCENARIO 1: *December Elections Go Awry*

President Conte loses the vote in the Moyenne and Haute Guinee regions and is forced into a runoff election. The government and ruling party panic and tamper with election results in these opposition stronghold areas in order to give President Conte the 50 percent of the vote he needs to avoid a runoff.

Opposition leaders and international observers cry foul. Anti-government violence erupts in these regions and gangs ransack ruling party offices and the houses of its officials, chasing many of them away. The government responds by sending anti-riot troops that clash with local youth gangs. A standoff occurs whereby the local population in these areas promises continued protest until new elections are held.

Response/Comment: Well before elections occur the donor community should strongly communicate to top government and ruling party officials of the necessity of honest, well-managed elections. It should be noted that international observers will be watching very closely this time for any election abnormalities; poor performance on the part of Guinean authorities in this regard could ruin Guinea's reputation and result in the reduction of assistance. Opposition leaders should also be cautioned in advance about resorting to violence in the event that they believe the election results have been manipulated.

If indeed agents of the government and its party corrupt the results of the election and a violent protest ensues, donors will need to intervene quickly and energetically to diffuse the situation. The best course would be a well-coordinated, common approach by key donors. In this regard, contingency-planning discussions should already be occurring among donor representatives. In any event, if indeed the elections were seriously tampered with, the best way out would be the holding of runoff elections. Donors need to be prepared to convince the government of this.

In the event the government refuses to hold runoff elections, donors will be forced to re-consider their assistance activities to Guinea. Seriously flawed elections could result in the suspension of the USAID program in Guinea. Widespread violence would lead to a reduction to minimal U.S. Mission personnel

and the evacuation of family members and non-essential personnel. Making sure that it has done everything within its power to do to avoid the occurrence of this worst case scenario should be a large part of Mission election preparations. Much work will be at a standstill and have to be put aside until the outcome of the coming December elections are known. Much forward planning will be dependent on this outcome.

Possible Indicators: Any important delays in the announcement of the vote from districts in the Haute or Moyenne Guinea regions might indicate potential problems. Informal reports early in the election and vote counting process from local election monitors and international observers could be a tip off to impending trouble. The banning of observers from vote counting stations would be an important sign of trouble, as would be the closing or vandalizing of polling and vote counting places. Any loss of ballots or failure to deliver ballots in a timely fashion in opposition strongholds should be viewed with suspicion. The mobilization of security forces in opposition strongholds might also indicate that the government expects trouble. The statements of opposition leaders and any harassment of them by government officials should also be monitored and interpreted.

Scenario 2: Violence Explodes in Sierra Leone and Refugee Numbers Multiply

Following Guinea's elections, ECOMOG begins a dry season offensive and attacks RUF rebels on all fronts. Refugee numbers in Guinea double. Rebels retreat into Guinea, occupying Gueckedou and the surrounding prefecture and parts of the Forecariah prefecture. Hundreds of Guineans are killed and thousands flee further inside Guinea. The Guinean army incurs heavy losses. Traffic in and out of Conakry is blocked by the military. A coordinated rebel attack from the Liberian side leads to the occupation of N'zerekore by forces allied with the Taylor government. Rebels fight furiously and make tactical withdrawals as they see this as ECOMOG's last effort before Nigeria's changed political situation obliges it to reduce its support of ECOMOG.

Response/Comment: The main way to prevent this from happening is to make sure that ECOMOG has the right plans and all the support it needs to execute them in an effective manner which will not result in this worst case scenario. Associated with this would be strong diplomatic action to assure that neighboring governments do not interfere in an undesirable manner. At the same time, humanitarian relief agencies should have in place contingency plans that could be put into action in the event such a terrible catastrophe occurs. Foreign missions should also be ready to implement their emergency evacuation plans. It would be better now to spend millions to support ECOMOG than millions later in relief efforts.

Although something on the scale as described in this scenario is unlikely, it is not unlikely that some violence and destruction will occur along Guinea's border with Sierra Leone. As long as rebel groups are armed, funded and free to maneuver, this high potential for cross-border violence and population displacement will exist. Eliminating in a definitive manner these groups is, therefore, vital for peace and development in Guinea. Beyond preventive diplomacy and decisive military action, there is not much that can be done about this sad situation.

One possible change in the above scenario is that rebel groups will time their own offensive or incursions into Guinea to upset the December 14 elections. This would give the government an excuse, if it wants one, for postponing the elections or delaying the announcement of their results. In any event, it would be very hard for Guinea to conduct elections if it is in a state of war.

Possible Indicators: Intelligence reports from ECOMOG would be an essential source of information. Reports on the important movements of troops and materiel should be followed. Sudden movements of populations away from the border would indicate fears of impending invasion by armed intruders. Increases in the size and number, in terms of rebels involved and damaged caused by them, of cross border incursions is another indicator worth noting. Evidence of rebels stealing food and forcefully conscripting new recruits could be significant. The discovery of any arms caches or shipments to the rebel-held zones would also be important factors. The disappearance of groups of young men from refugee camps might also indicate that trouble is brewing.

SCENARIO 3: *Revolt Within the Military*

The complaints that prompted the February 1996 mutiny within the army continue to go unsatisfied. Discontent within the Joint Chiefs of Staff and senior officers over not being properly consulted by the president grows. A growing number of troop casualties and the poor manner families are informed of these losses and compensated for them adds to tensions within the enlisted troops. Officers involved in the 1996 mutiny and their allies form a group which resents the concentration of power in the hands of Soussou officers. These officers develop close relations with opposition leaders and make secret pacts with Sierra Leone rebel leaders. Further tension and torture of military personnel sparks a mutiny similar to the February 1996 one, but with plans this time to overthrow the Conte government.

Response/Comment: As with the unforeseen army mutiny of February 2 and 3, 1996, there is little that can be done to prepare for such an event as described above. Again, preventive diplomacy and assistance which can persuade the government to take measures to alleviate conditions that could spark a revolt within the army. This means making sure security personnel are well and regularly paid, well led and trained, and adequately supported.

One way of defusing this kind of situation would be for President Conte to resign from the army, as required by the constitution of presidential candidates, and turn the direct control of the army over to a new general and an ethnically-diversified ministerial cabinet and joint chiefs of staff. Improvement in Guinea's human rights record, especially in regard to military personnel, also would help.

Informing families in a timely and dignified manner of the loss of their members at the battle front should not be difficult. Advising families of their benefits following such losses, and making sure they receive these benefits, should not be beyond the capacity of the government. Keeping secret the costs of its border involvement and the deaths resulting from them should not be necessary.

Restructuring the army to take into consideration the personnel involved in the 1996 mutiny and better redistribute important positions and promotions is needed. Perhaps the Mission could conceive, in

coordination with other embassies, and get approval of an innovative military assistance program which could help with this and other needs of the Guinean military. Guinea is one case where military assistance, especially in view of border conflicts, is a critically important complement to development assistance. If the peace within the military is not maintained and rebel groups cannot be contained, much of current development assistance will have been for naught.

Possible Indicators: Delay in the payment of military salaries and/or failure to make overdue salary raises could spark unrest within the military. Anything that interrupts the supply of adequate and cheap rice to the military for a long period would result in great tensions. In this regard, the status of the main Guinea supplier of rice to the army should be watched. Any strong disciplinary measures taken against military personnel who are popular among the troops could incite protests. The failure to provide new uniforms and improved equipment as promised could fuel discontent. Delays in granting overdue promotions and compensation to families who lost members in combat is another source of friction. Failure of the President and the Minister of Defense to consult with the Joint Chiefs of Staff about major military purchases would also cause some discontent among senior officers.

SCENARIO 4: *High Rice Prices and Cost of Living Prompt Riots*

Poor harvests in the world's rice-producing regions send rice prices to an all time high on international markets. The local rice harvest suffers from dry weather. Imported rice prices on local market increase by 50 percent, from 30,000 to about 45,000 GF per bag, and local rice is practically unavailable and costing over 60,000 GF per bag. The inflation rate surges to over 10 percent and salaries stagnate while new job creation is nil. Budgetary constraints force the government to delay salary payments to civil servants. Health workers in Conakry go on strike for higher pay and are later joined by other civil servants.

Following fights with riot police, angry striking workers ransack the Ministry of Finance. The IMF representative's car is stoned. Police accidentally kill one striking worker, further inflaming public opinion against the government. Strikes and accompanying violence spread to other urban centers. Government services are brought to a standstill. The government promises higher salaries but is unable to keep its promise. Donors scramble to calm the situation.

Response/Comment: All this could be prevented if there was budgetary wherewithal to provide regular salary increases that keep up with the cost of living. If structural adjustment is to have a human face, donors should work to find a way to keep salaries current, or slightly above, annual increases in the cost of living. A system should be put in place that allows for the regular survey of household expenditures for essential items and cost of living increases. Salary increases should be based on the results of these surveys. This system and the results it produces should be widely communicated. A special fund should be created to finance any salary increases. Donors could be invited to contribute to this fund. If such a fund can prevent the situation described above from occurring it is well worth it. Somehow, there must be some flexibility in the constraints imposed by the structural adjustment program on the civil service salary portion of the national budget. The government and donors need to change current policies and find ways to keep wages at a livable level. It is cheaper to pay decent

wages than deal with the destruction that too low wages can engender.

If massive, nationwide strikes do occur, donors should encourage quick compromise and offer assistance with government-labor negotiations. Ultimately, salaries will have to be increased; this will require donor contributions to avoid raiding other national budget categories or the printing of an over-supply of money. Addressing low salary and benefit issues will continue to haunt the government for some time to come.

Possible Indicators: International rice prices and harvest conditions in those countries which normally supply rice to Guinea should be followed. Any change in the status of principal Guinean rice importers might be significant. A better system for monitoring inflation and the cost of living at the household level needs to be devised. Prolonged stagnation in job creation and salaries should be constant warning signals. Growing disparity between the wealthy and the poor masses should be monitored over the long term.

SCENARIO 5: *Wild Card — President Conte Dies Suddenly*

Reports of President Conte's ill health increase. Rumors of his evacuation to Europe for medical reasons prove true. Two days after his death in a European hospital his passing is made public by the Minister of Defense. Three days later a huge funeral service for him is held in Conakry. Chaos ensues within the ruling party as different personalities jockey for power. The army is put on full alert. As provided by the Constitution, the President of the National Assembly takes over as interim President, but he is powerless.

New elections are called; they will to be held within 60 days. Campaigning is fierce and many instances of violence prompt the army to intervene. Martial law is declared. The army cracks down harder to calm the situation, but brutality on the part of some of its troops create a split within the army along Soussou and non-Soussou lines. After some bitter fighting, the non-Soussous take control and announce an interim military government until the next elections. Peace is restored but democracy takes a beating.

Response/Comment: Preparing for President Conte's succession should be an important agenda item that can be openly and freely discussed. Donors should make the government aware of certain measures that should be taken to ease the way for Conte's successor and help keep the peace. These measures should be described and a timetable for their execution established. Assistance with the implementation of these measures should be offered.

Nothing can really prepare one for the sudden demise of a president. The fragility of Guinea's democratic condition, with an over concentration of power in the hands of the President and a few associates, makes dealing with the spin off of such a tragedy much more difficult. Getting the President to recognize the need to pave the way for his successor and act energetically on the required measures, should be an important objective of diplomatic efforts following the December elections.

A military takeover, even a brief one, could lead to the suspension of donor aid. The Department of State's interpretation of the situation and, accordingly, how it determines application of Section 508 of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act could come into play. This act requires the suspension of U.S. development assistance (not humanitarian) to any country where the military has overthrown a duly elected government. This suspension remains in effect for one year and, if during that time the elected government has not regained power, the U.S. assistance program is closed. The USAID Administrator can make exceptions for specific activities in writing to the President of the United States.

Possible Indicators: Any increased frequency in medical visits by the president, particularly those which take place outside of Guinea, should be noted. Any signs of poor health and increasing absences from important official functions should also be analyzed. The departure of close family members and associates for prolonged stays abroad might signal fears about the President's health. The arrival of foreign doctors for the sole purpose of caring for the president should raise the level of alertness with regards to this issue. During these times, audiences with the president should be requested in order to gain first hand impressions on the status of his health.

EARLY WARNING CONFLICT/INSTABILITY INDICATORS

The main objective of a crisis early warning system is to ensure that government leaders and development administrators have access in a timely and regular manner to the information needed to make decisions which can prevent potential conflict. The information and analyses generated by the system should also help decision-makers discern opportunities for negotiating peace and mitigating conflict. The system should help decision-makers focus on key issues that require priority attention in order to achieve durable peace and stability.

The indicators proposed in the following table (Appendix 1) should be closely reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted accordingly. Although these indicators have been arranged in terms of their priority, no firm order of importance has been attached to them. The Mission might want, therefore, to arrange them in a different order of priority. Also, consideration might be given to the categorization of indicators according to whether or not they are structural in nature or easily triggered by unforeseen incidents. A discussion of these indicators might want to cover what can trigger or accelerate the development of conflict. The local, regional and international aspects of these indicators should also be considered.

This list of indicators is not exhaustive and should be modified as better, and more measurable, indicators are identified. In the Guinean context, there are undoubtedly many other indicators that can be followed. The selection of indicators needs to be carefully done so as to keep the number small, but significant and manageable. The Mission will need to determine how much time and resources it wishes to devote to tracking, analyzing and reporting on these indicators. A number of these indicators already mesh with the Mission's existing Strategic Objective (SO) indicators. The Mission might want to assign the job of tracking indicators which are not already covered by its SOs to its strategic planning and results center.

Watchfulness over many other early warning signs is also needed. These include remarks by any important personalities that can be judged as disrespectful or inflammatory. As the recent stormy exchanges between PUP party members over remarks made by the President of the National Assembly demonstrate, this can be particularly important in Guinea. In this regard, shifting alliances and loyalties among key political and military personnel can also be a sign of coming conflict. The sacking by the government of important personalities and politically motivated arrests can also be the harbinger of civil unrest. An increase in the number and size of private security companies could also reflect a rise in the crime rate. Other such indicators may also come to mind following Mission discussion of this paper.

One should look deeply into these indicators of possible conflict to determine the root causes of the impending crisis they may be suggesting. Addressing these root causes is necessary to maintaining stability over the long term. The difficult challenge of developing suitable responses to crises must take into account these root causes. While these responses can profit from lessons learned elsewhere, they must be tailored for the specific case being addressed in Guinea. This requires consideration of particular factors that could exacerbate or spread the conflict being considered. Important here is not to overlook the possible linkages between crisis response and follow-on development work.

Of critical importance to the elaboration of a crisis early warning system is the development of a network of observers, analysts and development/humanitarian specialists concerned with Guinea and the sub-region. Ideally, this network of individuals and their organizations will be able to communicate quickly and easily via electronic mail. Part of this network, and the Mission's information sources, should be respected locals, close to the scene, who can provide insights that might otherwise be overlooked. Building close ties with well-placed Guinean residents and utilizing on a regular basis the wisdom they possess about local events, is an essential part of an early warning system. In this regard, the Mission might want to set up a network system to review, revise and track crisis indicators.

The indicators which follow in Appendix 1 are listed under three categories: short-, medium- and long-term. The short-term category attempts to group those problems that are more imminent and could precipitate in the near term in conflict, therefore requiring more frequent monitoring. The medium-term indicators are aimed more at problems that are not likely to change or come to a head over a period of a year. The long-term category is for problems that are gradual and corrosive but need to be monitored on an annual or less frequent basis.

CONCLUSION

The natural high development potential of Guinea is jeopardized by the many factors of possible conflict and instability covered in this paper. As the information and ideas presented in this paper indicate, keeping Guinea on a sustainable development track will be difficult. The factors which could conspire to throw Guinea off its promising long-term development track are numerous and complex.

Guinea has miles and years to go before there is a climate that sufficiently inspires its people and attracts investment to the degree it needs to develop at the pace required to lift its people out of their state of extreme poverty. Widespread poverty and gross wealth and social disparities weigh heavily on

Guinea's development prospects. The ethnic divides at work in Guinea are also worrisome, as are the concentration of political power in the presidency and the continued strong role of the military. Neighboring violent conflicts and massive refugee flows make a large part of Guinea unstable. This latter aspect makes Guinea a special assistance case, complicating the process of economic and political liberalization. Exceptional, well coordinated development, humanitarian and military assistance approaches will be required to maintain Guinea's position as a vital island of stability in the sub-region. This will entail the transfer of a much higher level of resources from donor nations than is currently the case.

The main difference in whether or not Guinea will be able safely and soundly to make it through this difficult transition period will be the quality of governance and national leadership provided.

Competent and inspiring leadership can do much to maintain national unity and calm among the population. Even if conditions are bad, such leadership can quell the growth of general despair and the loss of hope which often fuel the tensions that result in instability. In Guinea's case, this means much depends on the abilities and wisdom of its President and his close associates.

APPENDIX 1. GUINEA: EARLY WARNING CONFLICT/INSTABILITY INDICATORS

INDICATORS	MEASURE	SOURCE	FREQUENCY	COMMENTS
SHORT TERM:				
Rice Price and Import Levels	% Rise in Price of 50kg bag and MT	Market Information Import Statistics	Monthly	Follow both local production and imports. Monthly market survey recommended. Any monthly increase of over 10% would be important.
Household Income/ Buying Power	Basket of Essential Goods	COLI/Household Surveys Salary Raises	Bi-Annual	Determine essential basket of goods (currently rice, oil, sugar, medicines and fish or meat) and devise system to collect information.
Job Creation	Number of Jobs	Ministry of Commerce C of C	Annual	Devise system to collect this info. Breakdown by private sector and government, including informal sector if possible.
Primary School Grads Entering Secondary School	% Increase/ Decrease	Ministry of Education Statistics	Annual	Constant increases over current level of about 40% desired.
Ethnic Group Domination of Key Posts	Number of Key Posts Held By a Single Group	Mission Reviews	Annual	Determine key civilian and military posts. Watch for changes after December elections.
Purchasing Power of Security Forces	% Salary Increases/Benefits	Ministries of Defense and Finance	Annual	Follow salary scales by rank and ethnic affinity. Includes Army, Gendarmes and Police.
Regularity of Promotions and Salary Payments within the Military	Number and level of promotions	Ministry of Defense	Annual	November 1 Army Anniversary Day might be good time to check this. The cost and regularity of rice deliveries to the military might also be followed.
Repatriation/ Resettlement of Refugees	Numbers/ Reductions in Camp Residents	UNHCR/NGO Reports	Bi-Annual	Regular refugee census/registration exercises will be required.
1998 Presidential Elections Legitimate	Donors Declare Elections Fair	International Observer Reports	48 Hours after Elections	U.S. Embassy issues statement, either independently or in coordination with other donors.
Armed Rebel Incursions	Number and Size of Damage	UNHCR/NGO. Ministry of Defense Reports	Bi-Annual	Frequency in attacks, increases in deaths and damage should be followed.

INDICATORS	MEASURE	SOURCE	FREQUENCY	COMMENTS
MEDIUM TERM:				
National Assembly Autonomy	Increase in Powers	Mission Evaluations	Annual	Powers and indicators of autonomy need better definition.
2000 National Assembly Elections Legitimate	No. of Opposition Members Increases	Elections Results and Observer Reports	Post-Election	Reductions in the number of veteran politicians in the assembly might also be evaluated.
2003 Presidential Elections Legitimate	Peaceful Transfer of Power to New President	Elections Results/ International Observer Reports	48 Hours after Elections	U.S. Embassy issues statement, either independently or in coordination with other donors.
Legitimate CRD/CUD Elections Held	Elections Held Before End of 1999	Observer Reports	Post-Election	Continued evaluation of this issue and what is needed to resolve it is recommended.
Private Radio and T.V. Stations Established	One Station Before the End of 1999	Mission Report/ Ministry of Commerce	Annual	Perhaps resistance to private radio needs further analysis.
Police/Military Checkpoints Reduced	No./Location and Severity of Checks	Mission/Donor Reports	Bi-Annual	Actual testing of checkpoints should be tried by Mission personnel.
Arbitrary Arrests/Prison Deaths	Number, Increase/Decrease	Embassy HR Report	Annual	Exact data will be difficult to obtain. Amnesty International may be a source of information on this.
Crime Rate	% Increase by Category	Security/Police/ Justice/Prison Records	Bi-Annual	Finding reliable information on this will be difficult. A breakdown between rural and urban would be useful.
Cost of Security Forces	% of GOG's National Budget	Ministries of Defense and Finance	Annual	Will require greater transparency than is currently the case.
LONGER TERM:				
Prosecution of Corruption Cases	Number and Importance of Cases	Ministry of Justice	Annual	Political/social level of the accused should be evaluated, as well as the quality of due process.
Development of Drug/Arms Trade	Number and size of incidents reported	Military/Police/ Justice/Prison Records	Annual	In addition, an estimation of unrecorded trade should be attempted. Kilos and kind of drugs seized. Kind of arms seized.
Judicial Independence and Competency	Absence of Political Influence	Mission Evaluations	Annual	Efficiency and transparency of important cases processed should be evaluated. Interviews with judges and private attorneys would be

INDICATORS	MEASURE	SOURCE	FREQUENCY	C O M M E N T S
				helpful.
Private Investment Growth	% Increase	IMF/Ministry of Commerce Report	Annual	Follow/compare both mining and non-mining sectors. 5% or more annual growth needed.
Growth of Non-Mining Sector	% Increase in Share of the Economy	IMF/IBRD/GOG Reports	Annual	If possible, growth in informal sector should also be monitored. Annual growth targets need to be set.
Wealth Distribution	% Quintile Concentration	Ministry of Planning GOG Reports	Every Three Years	Verify base and review system with GOG and other donors to measure 5-quintile breakdown of national revenue.
Fertility/CPR Rates	% Increase/ Decrease	DHS Surveys/ Contraceptive Sales	Every Five Years and Annual	Population structure and urbanization rate should also be covered. Targets should be set. Population densities should be noted.
Deforestation Rate	No. of Hectares of forest lost	Ministry of Environment Forestry Dept. Reports, Satellite Imagery Donor Reports	Annual	Ground-truthing of worst hit areas should be conducted.
Highland watershed protected	Quality and Quantity of water undiminished	Ministry of Environment Forestry Dept. Reports, Satellite Imagery Donor Reports	Annual	Regular surveillance of main source areas critical.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF CONTACTS

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APPENDIX 3: REFERENCES CONSULTED

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